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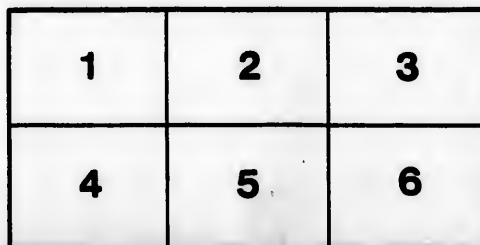
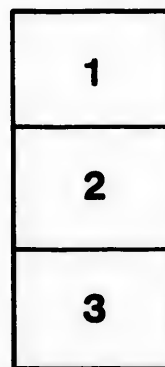
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*Inst. eccl. No 13*

# DEFENCE

OF THE

CLAIMS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH,

IN REPLY

TO

SEVERAL RECENT PUBLICATIONS

EDMUND MATURIN, A. M.

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PART I.

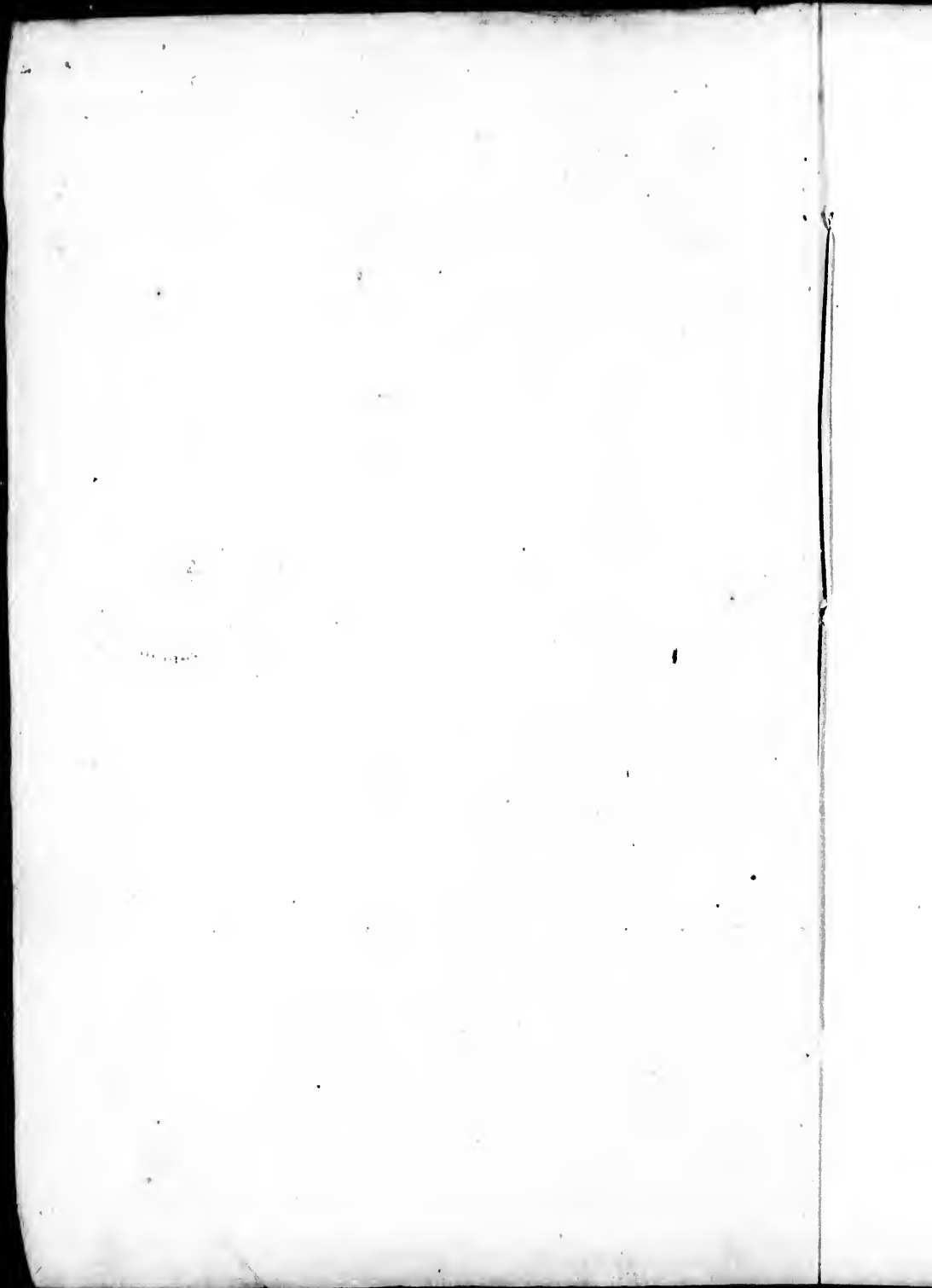
THE RULE OF FAITH,

INCLUDING THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF RELIGION, AND  
THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH.

HALIFAX, N. S.

COMPTON & BOWDEN, PRINTERS.

1859.



A

DEFENCE

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## A DEFENCE, &c.

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THE object of the following Work is to explain and defend the principles contained in a Letter which was addressed by me, a few months ago, to the Parishioners of St. Paul's, under the title of "The Claims of the Catholic Church." I freely confess that my motive for publishing that Letter was two-fold—first, to vindicate my own conduct in renouncing the profession of Protestantism, and joining the Catholic Church—and further, it was my principal aim to direct the serious attention of my former friends to the consideration of this solemn subject, with the view of persuading them to follow my example, in returning to the bosom of that Holy Church from which they have been separated by the events of the Reformation.

It is evident, indeed, that true religion must always be *diffusive* in its nature and influence, and that, wherever it really exists in the heart of *any* individual, it must be accompanied with an earnest effort to extend its blessings to *others*; those who adhere to *human* systems of religion may be *indifferent* to the progress of their respective views, because they cannot be supposed to involve any important practical consequences; but the case must be very different with the members of a Church which professes to have received and transmitted the *only complete revelation* of the Gospel of Christ, which God has been pleased to communicate from heaven for the salvation of the world. If there be really a consci-

entious conviction of the truth of its claims, it is surely impossible for any one who loves the souls of men to entertain no anxious concern for the conversion of those whom he believes to be under a dangerous delusion on the most important of all subjects relating to their present peace and everlasting happiness.

I am well aware of the great difficulty of producing any deep impression on the minds of Protestants, with reference to the *divine authority* of the Catholic Religion, which they have long been accustomed to regard as an absurd mixture of Superstition and Idolatry. I am fully sensible of the powerful effects produced by the prejudices of religious education, and early association, and national feeling, among those who have been trained in some of the various Protestant denominations, whose existence is founded on their opposition to the Catholic Church; and I believe that these feelings are increased by some peculiar circumstances connected with the secular position of the Church in this Province, as well as generally in the British dominions. It is fully admitted, indeed, that the *ancient* Church of Christ is not fairly represented in these countries, in the social and political situation of her children, while the weight of worldly rank, wealth, and influence is thrown entirely into the Protestant scale; and there can be no doubt that these and other disadvantages have operated very injuriously to the interests of the Church, by their tendency to promote the growth of that strange aversion with which she is generally regarded by those who have never examined the *grounds* of her spiritual claims, as the only true Church of Christ on earth. I am convinced that, in such a community as this, composed chiefly of intelligent and respectable Protestants, nothing could be more unpopular than to adopt the views, and embrace the communion, of a Church which is almost entirely un-

known to them in her real character, except through the calumnies and misrepresentations of her enemies. And yet, with all these discouragements before me, I have ventured to submit a general account of my own grounds of faith, and motives of conviction, to the dispassionate judgment of all sincere and conscientious Protestants, because I am fully persuaded that there are no difficulties too great to be removed and overcome by the Almighty grace of God, who alone can effectually enlighten the mind with the precious gift of faith, and touch the heart by the heavenly influence of His Holy Spirit. It was my earnest desire, then, to attempt to promote a calm and serious inquiry into this subject, without any controversial object in view; though of course I might expect that my Letter would be noticed, with hostile feelings, by those who, from their position and character, might think themselves called upon to undertake the defence of the Protestant religion. And I certainly do not mean to complain of this, as a personal attack on myself, or an invasion of the rights of conscience. Though naturally averse to all religious controversy, I am quite prepared to defend the sacred cause of the Catholic Church against every objection that can be urged in opposition to her authority. I have perfect confidence of success, not in my own abilities, but in the truth of the Catholic Faith, as the only divine revelation which has ever been given to man. I am not afraid of a full and free discussion of the whole question in all its various aspects. On the contrary, I would invite the most searching investigation into the entire system of the Catholic Church, with the most certain conviction that the result will be found to establish more firmly the solid foundation of eternal truth on which she rests, and the utter futility of every objection that can be brought against her principles, doctrine, and discipline.

With these sentiments, then, I shall now proceed to make some observations on the contents of several Pamphlets which have recently been published, in opposition to the views expressed in my Letter. I do not think it necessary to notice various *anonymous* articles in the Newspapers, some of which I have never seen, but there are others, which seem to require a more particular consideration. A brief allusion to this subject will be found in the Appendix to the Charge of Bishop Binney—which, however, merely refers to some general circumstances, some of which are founded on misapprehension of my own views, while the rest will be occasionally referred to in the course of the following pages. There are, however, four other Replies, which have made their appearance, each one of them being the representative of a different Protestant denomination—three of them written by Clergymen of their various Churches, and the fourth by a respectable Layman. The Authors of these Works are—Rev. Dr. Gray, (Church of England); Rev. Dr. Cramp, (Baptist); Rev. Mr. Hunter, (Free Church of Scotland), and Judge Marshall, (Wesleyan Methodist).<sup>\*</sup> However widely they may differ from each other on important points of doctrine, they have agreed to forget their differences for the present, and to unite in the defence of their common Protestantism, while, in addition to this, Dr. Gray undertakes also to vindicate the character of the English Reformation. The subjects to which these publications relate include the whole range of the

<sup>\*</sup> "A Letter to Members of the Church of England, by I. W. D. Gray, D. D., Rector of the Parish of St. John, N. B. In Reply to a Letter from Edmund Maturin, M. A."

"Scripture and Tradition. A Reply to Mr. Maturin's Letter on 'The Claims of the Catholic Church,' by J. M. Cramp, D. D. Second Edition with an Appendix."

"Review of E. Maturin's Letter. Sixth Lecture, delivered before the Protestant Alliance of Nova Scotia, by Rev. John Hunter."

"Errors Reviewed and Fallacies Exposed. Being a Protestant's Answer to E. Maturin's 'Catholic Claims.' By John G. Marshall."

controversy, and it is obviously impossible to enter into the discussion of every point of detail to which they refer, without far exceeding the limits which I have prescribed to myself in these pages. I am not writing a regular Treatise on Dogmatic Theology, but I shall endeavor to meet fairly the principal objections brought forward in these Replies, whether of a theological or historical character. I wish to treat my opponents with all due respect, and therefore, if I should appear to express myself strongly with reference to any particular statements, I trust that it will not be ascribed to any asperity of feeling towards the learned gentlemen who have taken the opposite view of this great question, but to my anxiety to defend the character of the true Church of Christ from every charge that is advanced against her spiritual claims.

I observe that my opponents indulge freely in strong assertions and general accusations against the Church, which they fail to substantiate by reference to any authentic *sources* of information. Indeed Mr. Hunter seems to think it quite unnecessary to quote any *authorities* in proof of his statements—Dr. Gray and Dr. Cramp give us some occasional references—while Judge Marshall confines himself to a single authority, that of Millner's Church History, to which he appeals in proof of every fact as an unquestionable standard\*. Such, then, is the general character of the theological adversaries with whom I have now to contend for the defence of the faith of the Catholic Church.

It has been commonly said, that Converts are usually the most bitter of all the enemies of the religious system which they have renounced; but certainly I must say, that I am not conscious of any such feelings towards Protest-

\* "Millner, estimable as he was for his piety, produced a work which merely proved how strangely he was destitute of the information most indispensable in the Ecclesiastical Historian."—Dowling's Introduction, p. 196.

ants, and especially towards the members of the Church of England. If I know anything of my own nature, I can truly say that my heart breathes nothing but a spirit of love and of prayer for those from whom I am now separated; and if any earthly motive could have induced me to hesitate in taking the final step, it would be the thought of grieving those to whom I am so deeply attached, as well as the recollection of the happy days of religious communion which I have enjoyed among them, and of the unmerited acts of kindness and affection which I have so constantly received from them. And while I continually remember them at the throne of grace and before the altar of God, I trust I am still, as ever, ready to promote their spiritual welfare in any way in which the Providence of God may grant me a proper opportunity in my present position.

I am aware that several remarks of a *personal* nature have been made with reference to myself, which I would willingly pass over in silence, in accordance with the spirit of the meek and judicious Hooker, who thus replied to the objections of his opponents—"Your next argument consists of *railing* and of *reasons*; to your *railing* I say *nothing*, to your *reasons* I say *what follows*."\* It may be sufficient to allude to one of these remarks, in which I am represented as having acted on a deliberate system of *hypocrisy* for many years, in continuing a *Protestant Minister*, while, it is said, I was secretly attached to the *Church of Rome* during all the time. Now I have little expectation of removing this impression from the minds of those who are determined to believe it; and though *I solemnly deny the truth of it*, I feel deeply that human opinion is of very little importance to me, and I trust I

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\* Walton's Life of Hooker. Compare Eccles. Pol. Book V. chap. xxx. "Our answer therefore to their Reasons, is No—to their Scoffs, NOTHING."

have learned to live for a nobler object than to obtain the approbation of man, however highly I may regard it in its proper place. I have said, indeed, (*Letter*, p. 11) that "*my heart was essentially Catholic, while my mind was accidentally Protestant.*" This contrast, between the effects of nature and of grace, seems to have been understood 'in opposite senses, though it is generally supposed to mean that I was in reality a Roman Catholic, while professing to be a Protestant. I thought I had sufficiently explained myself on this point in my Letter, but it appears that I have been mistaken. I need scarcely say, that it never occurred to me, that such a meaning could be put on this brief sentence, and certainly it was never intended by me. Indeed it is evident from other statements in my Letter, that the name of "Catholic" was used by me, not in its strict orthodox sense, but in its popular general signification, and though it may be difficult to define the precise ideas included in a term which is employed in such a latitude of interpretation, yet I suppose that it may be applied, in this extensive meaning, to all those Christians who are sincerely desirous to promote the true unity of the Church of Christ, in connexion with a spirit of deep humility, and entire submission to Ecclesiastical authority, as well as the practical exercise of all those feelings of awful reverence and tender devotion, which are properly said to be "essentially Catholic." Such, I trust, I was, in some degree, by the grace of God, even when I was a Protestant; and I thank God, that I did not resist His Holy Spirit when I received a divine call to join the Catholic Church. I was determined to act according to the convictions which He had produced in my heart, without any delay or human calculation—and I bless His Holy Name that I feel more and more deeply persuaded that I have acted in perfect accordance with the will of God.

It cannot be said that my resolution was adopted without mature deliberation; for though my early doubts remained *dormant* in my mind for several years, still an *impression* was produced which could never be entirely effaced, and which all my subsequent studies and reflections tended to confirm, though I am not sure that I would have been fully justified in adopting this final step at an earlier period of my life, for want of a more full conviction of the truth of the Catholic Religion. I trust I shall never be ashamed to confess and retract every error into which I may have fallen at any time, from any feeling of intellectual or spiritual pride. I hope to be always learning something new in the School of Christ, as long as I live. I know it is a rare gift to be a Catholic—it is all of grace—and I desire to give all the glory to God, while I feel that, conscious of the possession of a treasure of inestimable value, and having found, through the infinite mercy of God, the Pearl of great price, I wish to be an honored instrument of imparting to others a portion of those precious blessings which He has been pleased to bestow upon me, according to the riches of His grace. It must be admitted that the evidence of *Christianity in general*, and of *Catholicity in particular*, is not of such an *overwhelming* nature as to produce *irresistible* conviction of its truth in the minds of men. Almighty God does not *compel* the will of any one to accept the gift of eternal life; if this were the case, there would be no room for the exercise of moral *probation*, which constitutes such an important part of spiritual *discipline* in this world, and thus we find that men of the highest intellectual abilities are frequently overlooked, while God chooses many others of inferior capacities, who are endued with the spirit of humility, and calls them by His grace into the communion of His Holy Church on earth, and of his glorious king-



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dom in heaven. I must remark, however, that Dr. Gray and others have totally *misunderstood* the state of my mind and the extent of my Catholic tendencies, while I was a Minister of the Church of England. He plainly intimates, (*Letter*, p. 22) that I was guilty of making a false profession to God at the period of my Ordination, and that I "continued from year to year without believing the Articles to which I had subscribed." Now, I must say, that this statement is entirely *incorrect*, as I am certainly not conscious of the slightest degree of insincerity in my religious professions, during the whole course of my public ministry. I feel that I can truly say with the Apostle, that "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." With all my *imperfections* in the discharge of the duties of the sacred office—with all my *inconsistencies* in the daily walk of the Christian life—my conscience does not reproach me with any *want of truth* or candor in my conduct as a Protestant Clergyman. *I never held or taught a single article of the Roman Creed during that time*—on the contrary, I was cordially attached to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England, which I sincerely believed to be founded on the Word of God, and I always endeavored faithfully to teach and apply them as settled on the broad and *comprehensive principles* of the *English Reformation*, without adopting the views of any recent *parties* in the Church, whether *Tractarian* or *Evangelical*. My rule of faith was *the Bible, interpreted by the Prayer Book*, according to the Articles and Liturgy of the English Church. At the same time, I confess that, *in the abstract*, I had little regard for any of those *modern distinctions* which have divided the Universal Church of Christ. I trust it was my highest object to live and to act as a *Christian*, and not as a *Protestant*; and I regret to say that, from my own observation and experience in my na-

tive country, I have generally found that the *best Protestants* were the *worst Christians*—whose ideas of religion seemed to consist entirely in *hatred of Popery*, and attachment to the principles of the “glorious Revolution” of 1688, which was usually regarded by them as the *sole test* of Protestantism.

Dr. Gray thinks (p. 6) that “prejudices arising from descent and early education do not always require any great amount of evidence to overcome them.” I believe there are few who will agree with him in this position, and certainly I have ample proof to the contrary in the history of my own life. He appears also to suppose that the existence of religious *doubts* in the mind is quite incompatible with the *honest* profession of any decided *opinions* on the subject. This may be the case on *Catholic* principles, but evidently not on those of *Protestantism*, according to which a state of doubt is almost inseparable from all religious inquiry, as it is generally held to be impossible to attain to any *absolute certainty* on the doctrines of Scripture. It is true that I had doubts in early life, and occasional doubts at a later period, but they had not arrived at such a degree as to produce *decided conviction*, and therefore I did not regard it as inconsistent to remain in my former profession as a member of a Protestant Communion. I considered these doubts merely as temporary difficulties of a *speculative* nature, which would have no *practical* effect on my future plans of life, and accordingly, from the time of my Ordination, I tried to banish them altogether from my mind, and while engaged in active duties and involved in domestic cares, I vainly hoped that I was forever free from any further interruption to a life of private happiness and public usefulness. But that interruption did come at last at an unexpected time, and with it came the responsibility of obeying or resisting

the voice of God, who was calling me to renounce all human systems of religion, and to return to the unity of His Holy Church.

Dr. Gray says (p. 17) that I have not explained what were the "providential circumstances" which led me to the re-consideration of the whole controversy with Rome. Now I have no objection to state the particular occasion, though it may appear comparatively trifling to those who do not reflect on the mysterious constitution of the human mind, with reference to the means of reviving the *connexion* between *past associations* and *present convictions*. That occasion was the Funeral of the late Archbishop of Halifax, which took place on the 14th of August last, and to which I can distinctly trace those deep impressions which finally led me to the conviction of the divine origin of the Catholic Church. I am fully aware that the effect of such scenes must depend chiefly on the previous *preparation* which has taken place in the minds of the spectators. Some persons have been *converted* to the faith by the mere act of entering a Church, and witnessing the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice, while others have had their *prejudices increased* by the same act. The difference was not in the *objects* which they observed, but in the *state of mind* which was brought to bear upon them. And so it is with reference to the Catholic Service performed at the Burial of the Dead. All the external incidents connected with it—the slow and solemn procession—the long train of Ecclesiastics—the chanting of the Psalms—the fragrance of the incense—the lighted tapers—the elevated Cross—and all the other ceremonies, will be regarded with perfect indifference by those whose hearts are insensible to the beauties of holiness, whose minds are occupied with sectarian pride and ignorance, and who see nothing in all this but the vain pageant of

an empty show, and the sad proofs of a melancholy superstition. But to those who are fully alive to the great realities of eternity, who know the power of Christian sympathy between the living and the dead, who have felt the consoling sweetness of that blessed "Communion of Saints," and who possess an intelligent acquaintance with the spiritual meaning of the rites of the Catholic worship—such scenes will suggest holy thoughts of a very different nature, as they exhibit such a vivid illustration of the practical influence of those Christian hopes relating to the invisible world of departed spirits, which are realised in the Catholic Church alone. It is true that these events are not the *predisposing*, though they may be the *exciting, causes* of an inquiry which ends in implicit submission to the Church of God—just as a spark of fire when applied to a heap of combustible materials, may produce an instant conflagration, so it is with the effect of some slight external event on a mind *already prepared* to receive its influence. And such was the case with me, when all my former Catholic associations were completely revived, and I was determined, *now or never*, to decide on the great question which had so long engaged my attention. I was fully resolved to act in the spirit of the Apostle, who "was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." I had no need again to commence the study of a subject, with which I had long been perfectly familiar. But I determined to look at every difficulty fully in the face, and not to evade the force of facts and principles which were totally irreconcilable with the fundamental doctrines of Protestantism. Several weeks, indeed, elapsed before I arrived at a final conclusion. So far from a disposition to yield at once, as has been supposed, I struggled hard to retain my former position, and nothing would have given me more com-

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plete relief and more heartfelt satisfaction, than the discovery, that modern Protestantism was not a human corruption, but the genuine Christianity of the Apostolic times.

I had made arrangements to proceed to England, partly for the benefit of my health, but chiefly with the view of joining the Catholic Church, and without any fixed intention of returning to this Province. And yet I did not fully announce this plan, because I thought it quite possible that something might yet occur, which would enable me to defer, if not altogether to relinquish, this purpose. I knew very well that no advantage could be derived from any conference with my Protestant brethren, although I made a partial disclosure of my difficulties in one instance, which was kindly received—but it failed to produce any satisfactory result. Nor did I communicate my intentions to any of my fellow passengers on board the steamer to England, though I had a good deal of interesting conversation with several of them on religious subjects. We had, indeed, a Catholic Bishop on board\*, who was on his way to Rome, and though I had frequent interviews with him on the leading subjects of controversy, I did not intimate the state of my mind to him, as I was still in the position of an *inquirer*, and not of a *convert*. We had Divine Service, morning and evening, on Sunday, the 10th of October, according to the Liturgy of the Church of England, and I officiated on both occasions, with much interest, nor is there any thing which I taught *then*, which I could not with equal consistency teach *now*, as a Catholic Christian.

We arrived at Liverpool on the next Sunday morning, just in time for Church, and I was happy to have the opportunity of hearing two Sermons from the Rev. Dr. McNeile, who is so well known as an eloquent preacher

\* Right Rev. Maurice De St. Palais, D. D., Bishop of Vincennes, (Indiana, U.S.)

and a violent controversialist. I had hoped that a favorable impression, on the side of Protestantism, might even yet be produced by the persuasive arguments and the fascinating language of this gifted orator, but, however highly I admired his expositions of Scripture, his allusions to the subject of the Royal Supremacy and the political aspect of England with reference to the See of Rome, only tended (like Dr. Gray's remarks on the same subject) to confirm my former conclusions on these points.

On the following day I proceeded to Oxford. Dr. Gray thinks (p. 42) that I might afford to "shed a single tear over the tombs of Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley." I beg to assure him that I have *anticipated* his wishes, and have *literally* complied with his suggestion—not so much from a feeling of *sympathy* with the principles of those men, as of deep *emotion* at the awful events of the times in which they lived and died. The first place which I visited on my arrival at Oxford was the "Martyrs' Memorial"; and I well remember, that on arriving at the fatal spot, which is marked by a transverse stone in the crossway of Broad Street, opposite the Master's door of Balliol College, though it was a wet and stormy night, I fell on my knees on the ground, and offered up a prayer to the God of Saints and Martyrs, that He would mercifully strengthen His servants for every trial, and preserve His Church in the purity of the Christian Faith.

It was in the ancient city of Oxford, in the Cathedral of Christ Church, in the midst of a Protestant University, now in possession of the venerable Colleges, Halls, and Chapels of Catholic times, that my former plans were fully matured, and on the following Sunday, the 24th of October, I attended the Services of the Catholic Church in London.

The month of November came, and at that holy season

at which the Church celebrates the memory of "All Saints" who have gone before us, I had the inestimable privilege of being admitted into the "Communion of Saints" in the "Holy Catholic Church."

My return to this place was unexpected, and I thought it right to make some explanation to my Protestant friends, which I did in the form of a Letter, which has occasioned the present controversy. Dr. Gray says (p. 23) that this pamphlet "had no doubt passed under the revision of Cardinal Wiseman, as it did subsequently under that of Bishop Connolly." In this, however, he is mistaken, as *neither* of these distinguished Prelates had ever seen a line of it before its publication, and the only Bishop to whom I had submitted the Manuscript, was the *Protestant* Bishop of Nova Scotia, though I cannot say that it met with his Lordship's cordial approbation. Such, then, were the circumstances relating to the publication of this document.

But there is another point, to which I must briefly allude. It has been thought that I have drawn an *invidious comparison* between the piety of the lives of Catholics and Protestants; and this has been even construed into an ungrateful reflection on the Parishioners of St. Paul's. It is true that contrasts of this kind do not always come within the sphere of observation of those who are most deeply interested in them. But no one, surely, can for a moment imagine that I intended any allusions of a *local* or *personal* nature in any of the particulars there enumerated, which were stated solely with reference to the *general effects* of religion in different countries, and the *visible influence* produced by the Catholic Church, as tending to illustrate the *earnest* tone of piety which usually characterizes her members, as distinguished from the religious *apathy* which exists in the great mass of the

Protestant population. I do not hesitate, however, to express my conviction, that the moral and religious character of the Protestants of Halifax, collectively, will bear a favorable comparison with that of Catholics in any part of the world, for their zeal, devotion, and liberality; and if these amiable qualities were only produced as the fruits of holiness in connexion with the *true faith* of Christ, the Church might well rejoice in the acquisition of some of the brightest ornaments of Christianity to be found on the face of the earth.

However, I have no quarrel with *individual* Christians of any denomination, but with the general *principles* of modern Protestantism. I have now fairly embarked, contrary to my expectations and inclinations, on the stormy ocean of controversy, and I trust that I shall be guided safely through its tempestuous waves, under the protection of Almighty God. My frail bark is safely towed by the "bark of Peter," with the "Star of the Sea" shining propitiously upon it—it is the same boat which carries the Divine Head of the Church, as in the days of old—and therefore it can never be lost. The vessel is bound for heaven, according to the language of one of the Fathers\*, and steered, according to the old emblem, by the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul. When the mighty Cæsar was exposed to the dangers of the deep in an open boat on the Adriatic, he calmed all the fears of the terrified crew with the assurance—"Cæsarem vehis et fortunam Cæsaris." And what was thus presumptuously said by the proud Roman is perfectly applicable to the good ship which is still entrusted with the care of Christ and His Church, and which has braved all the storms of the world for the last 1800 years.

In the following pages, then, I propose to discuss the

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\* Clem. Alex. Pæd. Lib. III. Tom. I. p. 239. (Ed. Potter.)



principal points of controversy which have been taken up by my opponents, with reference to the true sources of all Christian doctrine. It is only necessary to remark, that as the present Reply is written chiefly with a view to the case of Protestants, I have thought it right to quote the passages of Scripture from the English *Protestant Bible*; and further, as it is also principally intended for the use of plain English readers, I have generally given the several quotations from the Fathers and other ancient documents in an *English translation*; while at the same time I have carefully marked the reference to each author and edition of his works in the original languages, that the learned Student may have an opportunity of verifying the correctness of the quotations in every instance.

Before I proceed to consider the particular objections which have been urged against the doctrines of the Catholic Church, it may be proper to take a general view of the principal subjects of discussion, in order to assist the reader in forming a clear opinion as to the true state of the question.

The whole controversy between Catholics and Protestants may be reduced to *one* comprehensive question, which involves the *fundamental* points of difference between the two systems. That question is the RULE OF FAITH, or the foundation of religion. It is of very little use to enter into the consideration of any *particular* subjects of doctrine, until we have first clearly settled the *general principle* on which every article of faith or practice is to be received or rejected. It is further necessary to understand, very distinctly, the precise meaning of the *terms* which are employed to describe the Rule of Faith held on both sides, as the want of a correct *definition* is one of the most frequent causes of perpetual

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confusion. All professing Christians fully admit that the *only source* of religious truth is *divine revelation*; but unhappily it is just from this point they begin to *diverge*, as we all know that there is a very wide difference in the practical *application* of this principle. *The Catholic Rule of Faith is THE WHOLE WORD OF GOD—the Protestant Rule of Faith is THE BIBLE ONLY.* But further, both Catholics and Protestants are agreed, that their respective Rules require an *Interpreter* to explain and apply them in all doubtful cases, for it cannot be denied that both these Rules are often ambiguous in their meaning, and afford no certain direction to the anxious inquirer on the most important and difficult questions. Here, then, is another step, involving the consideration of a *guide* as well as a *rule* in religion. Catholics hold that the only *authorised interpreter* of the Rule of Faith is THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD—while the same principle is generally admitted, in some sense, by Protestants, though many of them consider that *human reason* is quite sufficient to determine every doubt that may arise as to the true meaning of Scripture. And further, it is held by Catholics, that the organ of *communication* which the Holy Spirit is pleased to employ for the interpretation of His Word is THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, or the collective body of Pastors, under the government of their divinely appointed Head; while, according to Protestant views, EACH INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIAN is supposed to be fully competent to decide all questions of doctrine by the right use of reason, or as supernaturally assisted with sufficient grace to preserve him from all serious error in the interpretation of the Bible. But it is necessary to state these points more clearly and distinctly.

According to the doctrine of the Catholic Church, the *whole* Word of God consists of *two parts*, which are com-

monly described as SCRIPTURE and TRADITION. Now there is probably no subject on which so much confusion and misapprehension exists in the minds of Protestants as on that of Tradition. It seems to be constantly associated with something of a very different character from that of divine revelation. Indeed, it is frequently contrasted with Scripture, as if it were in direct opposition to it, the one being supposed to be of *divine* and the other of *human* origin. To such an extent was this prejudice carried in a past age, that the very name of Tradition was formerly exhibited in an odious light, in the English Protestant Version of the Bible, being always employed in connexion with some practice condemned by our Lord or His Apostles, while a *different* word was substituted in those passages which conveyed some expression of *approbation*, though the *original* term was precisely the same in both classes of passages.\* Most of these have, indeed, since been corrected, though not till after they had produced the intended effect; but there are some traces of this distinction still to be observed in the present Translation, and thus the very sound of the word was intended to express an offensive idea to the mind of the English reader. Now the word "Tradition," in its most comprehensive

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\* In every English Version of the New Testament, made by Protestants during the 16th Century, the word TRADITION was exclusively adopted wherever the passage referred to some religious CORRUPTION, but where the same Greek word was applied to some true doctrine, it was changed into another form by using one of the English terms, "ordinance," "instruction," or "institution." The word "tradition" was also sometimes introduced, where there was no corresponding term in the original, in connexion with some practice reproved by the Apostles—as for instance, in Col. ii. 20, which was translated, "Why are ye led," (or "burdened," in the Geneva Version) "with Traditions?"

Indeed this principle was fully admitted by Fulke, in his Confutation of the *Rhemish Testament*, in which he says—"We do avoid the term of Traditions, to distinguish the ordinances and doctrine delivered by the Apostles, from the traditions of men which our Saviour Christ condemneth." (Text of the New Test. fol. 347. Lond. 1589.) Thus the Protestant INTERPRETATION of the Bible was introduced into the TRANSLATION of the Sacred TEXT itself.

sense, properly means *whatever is delivered from one person to another*, whether written or unwritten, and the particular *character* of the Tradition depends entirely on the *nature* of the subject, or the *source* from which it is derived. Thus there are various *kinds* of Traditions—*divine* and *human*—*true* and *false*—*Jewish* and *Christian*—*doctrines* and *ceremonies*—the same general *name* being employed with reference to subjects of the most different and opposite nature. It is necessary therefore to explain that when we speak of Tradition as a *rule of faith*, we refer solely to the *doctrine taught by Christ and His Apostles*, which is therefore of *Divine* authority, and of *Apostolical* origin. As used by Catholics in this sense, Divine or Apostolical Tradition simply means *the whole Gospel of Christ, delivered by the Apostles to the Church*. It follows, of course, that Tradition, in the proper sense of the word, *includes Scripture itself*, although, merely with a view to *perspicuity* of arrangement, Scripture and Tradition are generally distinguished as the two component *parts* of divine revelation. In this limited signification, then, Tradition is regarded as *supplemental* to Scripture, and *each* of them as *incomplete* without the *other*. It is not meant, however, that the one is *independent* of the other, beyond the simple fact that they have been transmitted to us in a *different mode*, while descending in *separate streams* from the same *divine fountain* of Eternal Truth. And here, it is important to observe, for the information of some who appear really to have mistaken the meaning of the term, that when we speak of the *unwritten* Word of God, we do not mean that this part of revealed truth has never been written *at all*, but only that it was not written by the inspired *authors* themselves in the Canonical Books of *Scripture*. Many Protestants seem to think that Tradition is something of an *uncertain* and

*indefinite* nature, which requires to be constantly defined and explained by the Church to the faithful, as admitting of the most convenient latitude, by which it is capable of being adapted to any *addition* or *alteration* in the Catholic Creed. But nothing can be more erroneous than such a view. For while, according to Protestant principles, the language of Scripture may be understood in *every variety* of meaning, according to the mind of each *individual* reader, the Tradition of the Catholic Church, on the contrary, is *fixed* and *unchangeable*, as depending not on *opinions* but on *facts*, not on any *ambiguous form* of words, which may be interpreted in different senses, but on the *doctrine* of Christ and His Apostles, "the faith which was *once delivered*" (by tradition, as the original word implies) "to the Saints," transmitted in unbroken succession from the beginning, and guarded against the possibility of misapprehension and corruption, by the living, speaking voice of the Church, guided by the infallible teaching of the Holy Ghost. The Catholic Church rejects with abhorrence all human Traditions and inventions of men in the religion of Christ, and has always most carefully preserved the sacred deposit of divine truth committed to her trust, in all its original integrity, against every error and innovation, both within and without her own Communion. We may, then, briefly sum up this statement by saying that *the Catholic Rule of Faith is the WORD OF GOD, interpreted by the HOLY SPIRIT in the CHURCH OF CHRIST*—and *the Protestant Rule of Faith is the BIBLE, interpreted by the HOLY SPIRIT, or by HUMAN REASON, in EACH INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIAN, or in EACH PARTICULAR DENOMINATION of the Reformed Churches.*

It will be observed, then, that I am not now *arguing* this point, or drawing any *inferences* from received opinions, but simply endeavoring to convey a faithful

representation of the *real principles professedly held* on both sides of this great controversy.\* Now, in order to test the soundness of these principles, it must be admitted that the only important question for our consideration is this—*What was the Rule of Faith laid down by OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES for the perpetual guidance of the Church?* The answer to this question is perfectly clear and decisive, and it is contained in a book which is believed by Protestants as well as by Catholics to be of the highest authority, and therefore we may safely appeal to the New Testament, as a record of historical documents, independently of its Divine inspiration. For this purpose we shall now refer to the great commission given to the Apostles by our Divine Redeemer, shortly before His Ascension into Heaven. We read in the 28th Chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, that "Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore and *teach all nations*, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, *teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you*, and lo ! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." The same commission is more briefly expressed in the 16th Chapter of St. Mark's Gospel, in the following language—"And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and *preach the Gospel to every creature*. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Here, then, we have the Divine Rule of

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\* Dr. Cramp says (p. 53) that I have quoted the Decree of the Council of Trent "in order to PROVE that Scripture and Tradition united constitute the divine rule of faith and practice"—and thus have been guilty of the fallacy of a "petitio principii" by appealing to the authority of the Church as a conclusive demonstration. Now there is not the slightest foundation for this accusation, as it is evident that I referred to this document, not as a PROOF for the conviction of Protestants, but simply for the purpose of STATING THE QUESTION on the real doctrine of the Catholic Church, as expressed in her own authentic declaration.

Faith proposed by our Blessed Saviour, the *authoritative teaching of His Apostles and their successors for ever*, defined by Himself, and enforced with the most awful sanctions, in the language of Him who has declared—  
 “the word that I have spoken the same shall judge you in the last day.” Now it is evident that this commission is *still in full force*, that it never has and never will be *superseded* by any other, for it was to last “*always, even unto the end of the world,*” and yet the Apostles themselves are dead for nearly 1800 years; it cannot therefore relate to them *personally*, but *officially*, as existing still on earth in their representatives and successors in every age. It has been said, indeed, that this promise *may* be applied, not to any *living representatives* of the Apostles, but to their own *inspired writings* contained in the New Testament. But this interpretation is only an attempt to make the word of God of none effect by the traditions of men, and to substitute a *human theory* for *Divine authority*; for our blessed Lord gives *no instructions* whatever to His Apostles, with regard to any *written documents*, but only with regard to their oral *teaching*. He does not tell them to *write* a book, but to *preach* the Gospel, and thus he declares the *foundation* of all divine faith to be the *tradition of the Apostles*, or the unwritten word of God. Had our Saviour really intended that his religion should be fully recorded in a *book*, which all persons might consult and explain for themselves, as a *complete* collection of Christian doctrines, we might surely be justified in the expectation that He Himself would have committed some portion of it to writing, or at least, that He would have given some directions to His Apostles on a point of such vital importance, and made some reference to such written documents as the only directory of the Church in all future ages. Yet we find that He makes no provision

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whatever for such a mode of instruction, and it is obviously impossible to account for His silence on this subject, consistently with Protestant principles. He evidently proposes quite a different Rule of Faith, and there is not the slightest intimation given in the New Testament,—indeed it is directly contrary to the words of our Lord—that this rule was only intended to be of *temporary* obligation, that it was to *cease* when the Canon of Scripture was completed, or that any *other* rule was ever to be substituted for it after the death of the Apostles. And we find that the uniform practice of the Apostles was in perfect accordance with our Saviour's directions. Such was the language of St. Paul to the Corinthians—“I have *received of the Lord* that which also I *delivered unto you.*” (1 Cor. xi. 23.) Here is the *source* and the *channel* of Apostolical Tradition, *received from Christ, and delivered by the Apostles* to the churches, *not* in their *written* works, but in their public *teaching*, as the foundation of Christian doctrine. And again, in another remarkable passage in the same Epistle, he says—“*I delivered unto you* first of all, *that which I also received*, how that Christ died for our sins, *according to the Scriptures.*” (1 Cor. xv. 3.) Here we have an instructive instance of the connexion between *direct revelation* and *Scripture testimony*. He appeals to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, *not* as the *exclusive source* of his own doctrine, but as *fully harmonising* with it, and confirming the truth of what he had received by immediate communication with Christ. He does not profess to give any *new revelation* to the Church in writing, but simply to explain and enforce what he had delivered to them before in the course of his previous teaching. And I may here refer to a passage contained in my Letter (p. 50) in which I remarked that “the whole system of Christianity would



have been *precisely the same* at the present day, *if the New Testament had never been written at all.*" Some of my opponents have strongly objected to this statement, but I confess I am quite a loss to understand on what grounds. It is difficult to conceive how it can be denied by any Christian. Is it supposed that the Apostles communicated any *new system* of Christian doctrine in their *writings*, which they had *omitted* to deliver to the Churches in their personal *teaching*? Then it will follow that they must have instructed their converts very imperfectly in the truths of the Gospel, though St. Paul could confidently appeal to the Ephesian elders on this point when he says—"I have not shunned to declare unto you all *the counsel of God,*"—and again, to the Galatians—"Though we, or, an angel from Heaven, preach *any other Gospel* unto you than that which *we have preached* unto you, *let him be accursed.*" It is evident, indeed, from the whole tone and structure of the Apostolical Epistles, that they were never intended to convey any *new* revelation of the doctrines of Christianity, *in addition* to those which had been *already* delivered by the Apostles to the Churches, in the course of their public ministrations. Their language is constantly to this effect, as *reminding* them of the doctrines which they *had previously taught* among them. Thus St. Paul says—"Remember ye not, that when I was yet with you, *I told you* these things?" (2 Thess. ii. 5.) St. Peter says—"I will not be negligent to put you always in *remembrance* of these things, *though ye know them.*" (2 Peter i. 12.) St. John says—"Brethren, *I write no new commandment* unto you, but an old commandment *which ye had from the beginning.*" (1 John ii. 7.) Such are their general statements, and we may fairly invite any Protestant to prove that there was any one article of faith taught in the *Writings* of the Apostles, which had

*not* been *already taught* by their oral instructions in the Church—or to prove that *every* article of faith which the Apostles delivered to the Church was *afterwards* particularly explained in their *Writings*, and that we are fully justified in *rejecting* it, unless we are satisfied that it was distinctly taught in the *written Epistles*, as well as the *oral instructions*, of the Apostles. We ask then, What was the Rule of Faith held by the Primitive Church in the beginning of Christianity? It was certainly *not* the New Testament, for it was *not written* at the time. And yet, here were Christians fully instructed in all the doctrines of the Gospel, and perfectly united together in the faith of Christ, which they had received from the Apostles and other zealous Missionaries. The foundation of their faith was Apostolical Tradition, or the Gospel preached by the Apostles, to which no addition was ever made by the completion of the Canon of Scripture, and the *same* foundation *has continued* ever since in the Church, and *will continue* to the end of the world, according to the word of Christ.

This, then, was the general argument to which I referred in my Letter—not as founded on any *theory* whatever, but on a plain matter of *fact* in the early history of Christianity. The Church of Christ was in existence *long before* the New Testament was written, and therefore it follows that the Church could not possibly have been *founded* on the statements of a book which was *not in existence* at the time of its foundation. The first Christian Church on earth was established at Jerusalem by the Apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost, whereas the first part of the New Testament, St. Matthew's Gospel, was not published for several years afterwards, and the Church was extended over a great part of the world before the New Testament was completed by the publication of St.

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John's Gospel. Consequently, it is perfectly clear that the New Testament was *not* the *original authority* on which the first preachers of the Gospel acted in the propagation of Christianity, and that they were possessed of a *divine commission*, quite *independent* of any *written documents* whatever. This commission was derived from *Christ Himself*, and not from the New Testament, and it is on this principle that the Church has *always* acted, in perfect accordance with the directions of Scripture itself. For we find that in every question of doctrine or practice, the New Testament invariably refers us to the authority of the *Church*, and not to its *own* declarations, as the foundation of all faith; it is the *living voice of the Pastors*, and not the indefinite statements of a *written book*, by which all controversies were appointed to be finally decided. Take the following passages as examples of this principle—"Tell it unto the *Church*, but if he neglect to *hear the Church*, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall *bind on earth*, shall be *bound in heaven*, and whatsoever ye shall *loose on earth* shall be *loosed in heaven*." (Matt. xviii. 17, 18.) "He that heareth *you* heareth *Me*, and he that despiseth *you* despiseth *Me*, and he that despiseth *Me* despiseth *Him that sent Me*." (Luke x. 16.) "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth *whomsoever I send* receiveth *Me*, and he that receiveth *Me* receiveth *Him that sent Me*." (John xiii. 20.) "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that cause division and offences *contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned*, and avoid them." (Romans xvi. 17.) "But if any man seem to be contentious, *we* have no such custom, neither the *Churches of God*. And *the rest will I set in order when I come*." (1 Cor. xi. 16, 34.) "He gave some, Apostles, and some, Prophets; and some, Pastors and Teachers, for

the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, *till we all come in the unity of the faith.*" (Eph. iv. 11-13.) "*Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account.*" (Heb. xiii. 17.) It may be thought, perhaps, that the reference to Church authority is not so explicit or so frequent as might have been expected, but we must remember that the primitive Christians did not require to be constantly reminded of the duty of submission to an authority which was *never denied* by any of them, and which was continually before their eyes in its practical exercise. But if these texts are *comparatively few*, we ask, on the other hand, can Protestants bring forward *any texts at all* which ever refer to the *New Testament* as the *only* standard of doctrine? is it not an extraordinary omission, that there is not the slightest allusion to this collection of inspired documents, in all the Sacred Writings? and how is it possible to account for their total silence on the subject, if it was really the intention of the Apostles to substitute the *New Testament* for *Church authority*, after their own death? Of course it was held *then*, as well as *now*, that nothing can be decided by the Church, *contrary to Scripture*, and the office of the Church could only apply to those cases in which no *decision* was recorded in Scripture, or in which its language was capable of *different interpretations*; and these cases, it must be confessed, include almost the whole range of Christian doctrine.

Here, then, we must perceive at once the absurdity of every attempt that is made to prove the complete sufficiency of Scripture by an appeal to any *particular texts* of Scripture. The doctrines of Christianity are generally supposed, by Protestants, to be fully recorded in the New Testament. But *there is not a single text of Scrip-*

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ture which contains any reference to the existence of the New Testament,—and much less, there is not a single text of Scripture which ever asserts that all the doctrines of the Gospel are to be found written in the New Testament. How is it possible, then, to prove from Scripture the completeness of a rule which is never mentioned in Scripture? Is it not strange, that an appeal should be made to Scripture in proof of the sufficiency of the New Testament, when there is not a word in Scripture about the New Testament at all? \* This simple fact, then, immediately disposes of every plausible argument that can be founded on any particular statement of Scripture, and shows that the whole process of reasoning is a mere sophism. The object is to prove the sufficiency of Scripture, and various texts are alleged which are supposed to relate to this subject. But it is not defined what is meant by "Scripture," and consequently the term is used in one sense in the premisses, and in another sense in the conclusion. For all the texts quoted relate to the Jewish Scriptures or the Old Testament, while Protestants apply them to the Christian Scriptures or the New Testament, to which they have no reference whatever in the language of the sacred writers.

We conclude, then, that it is utterly impossible to establish the Sufficiency of Scripture by an appeal to Scripture itself—and that for two reasons—because it is necessary first to prove the Inspiration of Scripture itself, before we can found any argument on it as a book of Divine authority—and further, because, in point of fact, Scripture makes no statement whatever, with reference to the existence or authority of the New Testament.

\* It is scarcely necessary to remark, that there is no reference to any inspired collection of Writings in those passages which speak of the New Testament (Matt. xxvi. 28., Mark xiv. 24., Luke xxii. 20., 1 Cor. xi. 25., 2 Cor. iii. 6., Heb. ix. 15.) as this expression evidently refers to the CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION as distinguished from the JEWISH COVENANT,

It cannot be denied that the inspiration of Scripture must be proved by some authority *external to itself*, as it is manifest that *no book* can prove its *own* inspiration, until that book is *first* proved to be *inspired*, and besides, there is not one of the sacred writers who ever directly *asserts* his own inspiration. Now we all know that the Mahometans appeal to the Koran as an inspired book, and the only proof of its inspiration to which they refer is the assertion of the *book itself*, which declares that none but God could have composed it, and that the Koran itself is a perpetual miracle.\* Why do we reject this proof? Because it is not supported by any *external evidence* which can be traced to *Divine authority*. It is well known that Mahomet himself expressly disclaimed all pretensions to miraculous powers, and, like the Reformers of the 16th Century, rested solely on the *internal* evidence of the Divine origin of the Koran. We all see the absurdity of this mode of proof as applied to a *false* religion, and yet the same principle is often employed in proof of the inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures. Now, in order to possess the Bible as a *Divine book*, it is necessary that we should have *received it from God*, and that God should have *declared Himself* the Author of it. But how can the Divine origin of the Bible be established on Protestant principles, which do not acknowledge the existence of any *divinely appointed medium* of communication with God? It is certain that we have not received the Bible *directly* from God—it has come to us *indirectly*, through the hands of *others*, and we must therefore depend on some *external* authority in proof of its inspiration. Even if the Bible itself directly asserted it, this would not be sufficient. To attempt to prove the *inspiration* of the Bible by its own *authority*, and its *authority* by its

\* Paley's Evidences, Part II. chap. xi. sect. 3.

*inspiration*, is merely an example of a "vicious circle" in argument. Its divine authority must first be established on *independent* grounds—it must be declared by the *infallible* decision of the *Word of God*, before we can make an appeal to it for the proof of any doctrine. There must therefore be some *external institution*, on whose infallible testimony we receive the Bible as a divine book. Without this testimony, it is evident that we cannot make an *act of faith* in the Bible, or in the doctrines of the Bible, as we have otherwise no proof of its divine origin, but what is founded on our own imagination. To say that we receive the Bible on the ground of its *own inspiration*, or on the testimony of the *Spirit of God*, is to *assume* the very thing to be proved, and of which we have no evidence, but what is founded on the divine attestation of a visible society instituted by Christ, which is fully recognised by all Catholics as "the Church of the living God, the Pillar and Ground of the Truth."

It is evident, then, that we cannot make any use of the Bible as a *rule of faith*, until we have first clearly settled *what books* are entitled to be admitted into the Bible; and it is obviously impossible to ascertain this point from the Bible *itself*, because it is entirely *silent* on the subject, and gives us no information as to the names or number of the books to be received into the Canon of Scripture; and this circumstance forms an insuperable objection to the opinion of the complete sufficiency of Scripture, as it does not even profess to define the extent of its own authority, or the constituent parts of which it is composed.\* It is often said, indeed, that the *genuineness* of the

\* This point is fully admitted by Hoeker, in his controversy with the Puritans "It may be notwithstanding and oftentimes hath been demanded, how the books of Holy Scripture contain in them all necessary things, when of things necessary the very chiefest is to know what books we are bound to esteem holy; which point is confessed impossible for the Scripture itself to teach."—(Eccles.

books of Scripture may be proved by means of ancient MSS. like all other works of antiquity, and being thus traced up to their original authors, their *inspiration* is the necessary *consequence* of their genuineness. But, even if this statement were correct, it follows from it that we possess the Bible only as a *human book*, like the works of classical authors, resting merely on critical evidence and historical testimony, which cannot be supposed to constitute the *grounds of faith* in a divine revelation. On the contrary, Catholics receive the Bible as a *divine book*, depending entirely on the *divine authority of the Church* for the proof of its inspiration, and that authority *itself* proved by a divine commission and by divine acts, whereas it cannot be pretended that any miracle was ever performed in proof of the inspiration of the New Testament or of any of its parts. Revelation itself, as Bishop Butler well remarks, is an *invisible* miracle, which requires to be proved by *visible* miracles\*. But it is impossible to allege that any such attestation has ever been given in proof of the *Canon of Scripture*, while it is perfectly clear that such miraculous interpositions have

Pol. Book I. chap. xiv. Koble's Ed. 1841. Vol. I. p. 267.) And again, "It is not the Word of God which doth or possibly can assure us, that we do well to think it His Word. For if any one book of Scripture did give testimony to ALL, yet still THAT Scripture which giveth credit to the rest would require ANOTHER Scripture to give credit unto it, neither could we ever come unto any pause, whereon to rest our assurance this way."—(Book II. ch. iv.) Indeed, even Luther himself acknowledged, when disputing against the Anabaptists, that "WE HAVE THE WHOLE SCRIPTURE, and the office of preaching, FROM THE POPE; otherwise we must go and make a new Scripture."—(De Captiv. Babylon. cap. ii.) However, the learned Lutheran, Professor Michaelis, in the last Century, maintained that "no Protestant can appeal on this subject to the testimony of the Church."—(Introduction to N. T.—Marsh's Trans. Vol. I. p. 76. 4th Ed.) The modern German School has consistently applied this principle, and, acting on the right of private judgment, has ended in rejecting, not only the Canon, but even the Inspiration of Scripture. Such is the progress of the Reformation in that country, which was the first to reject the authority of the Church, the legitimate consequence of which is the rejection of the authority of Scripture.—See Rose's "State of Protestantism in Germany," p. 106 2nd Ed.

\* Butler's Analogy, Part II. Chap. ii.



been frequently given in proof of the *divine authority of the Church*, which is therefore the ultimate foundation of all religion.

It is obviously unreasonable, then, even on Protestant principles, to appeal to Scripture *alone* in proof of *every* article of faith, since the very Canon of Scripture itself *presupposes* the existence of *another* authority in the Church, which is generally understood by the name of Tradition. But Judge Marshall inquires (p. 11) "Where is the text or authority in Scripture for the assertion that the *oral teaching* of the Apostles was to be delivered and preserved by Tradition in the Church?" Now, though this question involves a *petitio principii*, as it *assumes* that direct Scriptural authority is necessary for every point of faith, still I have no objection to meet him on this ground, and I beg to refer the learned Judge to the following texts—Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. Mark xvi. 15. Luke xxiv. 47. Acts i. 8. Rom. x. 14, 15. 1 Cor. xi. 2. 2 Thess. ii. 15. 2 Tim. i. 13., ii. 2., iii. 14. I hope that these texts will be found satisfactory, as they all relate to the testimony of Scripture in favor of the perpetual authority of Apostolical Tradition. But surely, I may be allowed to retort the question, and propose the inquiry—"Where is the text or authority in Scripture for the assertion that *all the doctrines of the Gospel* were to be delivered and preserved in the *New Testament*?" I confess I do not expect to receive a satisfactory answer to this question, as it is impossible to allege a *single text* to this effect, for there is *no authority* in Scripture for such an assertion.

But it is said, if this be the case, "what need at all could there have been for these sacred records being made?" Certainly we admit that they never could have been intended as an *independent* rule of faith, because all the doctrines contained in them had been *already deli-*

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vered to the Church. But still they were of the most important practical use for the perpetual edification of the Church of God, as the writings of all holy men, in every age, are in an inferior degree, though they do not profess to contain a *complete* development of the system of Christianity. See John xx. 30, 31. 2 Cor. i. 13. Phil. iii. 1. Heb. xiii. 22. 2 Peter iii. 1. 1 John i. 4. Jude 3.

But the Judge remarks, that "as to the sayings of some Fathers on the point, the writer has not told us who they are, or when they flourished," and accordingly he wishes to have further information on the subject. I shall proceed, then, to quote some of their testimonies, in the order of time in which they flourished.

1. Tertullian, (A. D. 200). "Let us then inquire, whether no Tradition should be admitted, *unless it be written*. I will allow that it should not, if no examples of other practices can be adduced, which we maintain *on the sole ground of Tradition* and the force of custom, *without the smallest written authority*. Of these and other usages, if you ask for the written authority of the Scriptures, none will be found. They spring from *Tradition*, which practice has confirmed and obedience has ratified."\*

2. Origen, (A. D. 230). "The Church *by Tradition* received from the Apostles the practice of administering Baptism to Infants."†

3. St. Basil, (A. D. 370). "Among the points of belief and practice in the Church, *some* were delivered in *writing*, while *others* were received by Apostolical *Tradition* in a mystery, that is, in a hidden manner, but *both* have an *equal* efficacy in the promotion of piety."‡

4. St. Epiphanius, (A. D. 370). "We must look also to *Tradition* for all things cannot be learned from the *Scriptures*."

\* De Corona Militis, cap. iii. iv.—Tom. IV., p. 340, 341. (Ed. Semler.)

† Hom. in Cap. vi. ad Rom.—Tom. II., p. 543. (Ed. Bas. 1571.)

‡ De Spiritu Sancto, cap. xxvii.—Tom. III., p. 54. (Ed. Ben.)

For which reason the holy Apostles left *some things in writing, and others not.*"\*

5. St. Chrysostom, (A. D. 400). "Hence it is plain that *all things were not delivered in writing, but many without writing, yet the latter are to be believed in like manner as the former* ; therefore, let us hold fast to the *Traditions* of the Church."†

6. St. Augustine, (A. D. 400). "With respect to divine authority, whatever the *whole Church* observes, which was not decreed by Councils, but *always retained*, is justly believed to be of *Apostolical origin.*" ‡

We have here a few examples of the doctrines held by the Fathers on this subject. But the Judge is "fully warranted in not admitting their authority as infallible." Most certainly—no one ever thought otherwise. The Fathers were fallible men like ourselves ; but we hold it as an article of faith, that the *Church of Christ*, guided by the *Holy Spirit*, is *infallible* in all its definitions of doctrine, according to the promise of Christ. We do not refer to the *Fathers* for the *proof* of any *doctrine*, but for the *proof* of the *fact* that such doctrine was held by the Church in their time. We do not rely upon their *authority* so much as their *testimony*. We appeal to them as *witnesses*, not as *Judges* of controversy. We do not *assume* the Infallibility of the Church in arguing with Protestants. We allege the testimonies of the Fathers on this and all other subjects of controversy, simply for the purpose of showing, by historical evidence, that the doctrines *now* held by the Catholic Church have *always* been held by the Christian Church from the beginning, while the doctrines *now* held by Protestants are *modern* innovations, totally unknown to the ancient Church in its

\* Hier. xli., (sive lxi.)—Tom. I. p. 511. (Ed. Col. 1682.)

† Hom. in 2 Thess.—Tom. XI. p. 532. (Ed. Ben.)

‡ Contra Donatist. Lib. IV., cap. 21.—Tom. IX. p. 140. (Ed. Ben.)

first, and best, and purest days. We ask, then, even on the low ground of human probability—which is it most likely that *the whole Church* was mistaken for so many hundred years in some of the most important doctrines of Christianity—or that *the opinions of a small minority* of professing Christians in the present day are founded on error? For it must be remembered, that Christianity is a great historical *fact*, which has now been before the world for the last 1800 years, and not merely a collection of abstract, *opinions*, founded on the conclusions of Theological speculation. If it be said, that we are now capable, by the private study of the Scriptures, of making discoveries of religious doctrines which were unknown to the ancient Church, and of rejecting those which were universally held in former times, then it follows that the original revelation must have been of a most incomplete and indefinite character—we are adopting the principle of the “development of Christian doctrine” in its most objectionable form, and our theories of divine truth will appear to consist, not merely in new *interpretations* of Scripture, but also in new *revelations* of doctrine. But it is said, that the *Scriptures* are *divine*, while the works of the *Fathers* are only *human*. Granted; but the Protestant *interpretation* of the Scriptures is only *human*, and it is presumed that the Catholic Church has at least an *equal* claim. Protestants have, *at the best*, nothing but their own *private judgment* to guide them in ascertaining the meaning of Scripture, while Catholics have, *at the worst*, the *same* advantage—with the *further* assistance of an *infallible authority* to preserve them from all error in doctrine.

It is said, however, that the Scriptures are so very *plain*, that no one who is not wilfully blind can mistake their meaning on any important subject. If this be true, why,

then, do Protestants *contradict each other* in their interpretations of Scripture, involving the most fundamental doctrines of Christianity? Why do they found *different and opposite doctrines* on the *same texts*?\* It is evident, that *facts* refute this theory, while every heresy that has arisen in the Church appeals to Scripture in proof of its origin in the inspired Word of God. Thus it was remarked by St. Hilary, in the 4th Century—"Recollect that there is not one of the heretics who does not now impudently assert that all his blasphemies are derived *from the Scriptures*. Thus all urge the Scriptures without any knowledge of them, and without faith talk of their faith. For it is not merely by *reading*, but by comprehending the *sense*, that the Scriptures are to be weighed."† This artifice is thus referred to by St. Vincentius, in the 5th Century—"It may be asked," he says, "do heretics appeal to the testimony of the Scriptures? Yes, certainly they do, and with great vehemence, for you may see them running through all the books of the divine law, in Moses, in the Kings, in the Psalms, in the Apostles, in the Gospels, in the Prophets, they almost never allege anything of their own, which they do not pretend to shadow by the words of Sacred Scripture." "And if any one demand of any of these heretics, How do you prove and convince me that I ought to forsake the universal and ancient faith of the Catholic Church? immediately he replies, *because it is written*; and at once he will allege you a thousand testimonies, a thousand examples, a thousand authorities, out of the Law, out of the Psalms, out of the Apostles, out of the Prophets, by which, *interpreted after an evil fashion*, he would

\* Thus, an old writer enumerates 200 interpretations of Matthew xxvi. 26, and Winer, the German critic, affirms that there are no less than 250 different explanations of Gal. iii. 20.

† S. Hilar. Pictav. Opp. Ad Constant. Lib. ii. p. 1230. (Ed. Ben.)

cast headlong the unhappy soul from the tower of the Catholic Church into the deep abyss of wicked heresy."\* It was in opposition to these dangerous perversions of Scripture, that St. Vincentius laid down the proper rule by which the true Christian is to defend and preserve his faith, by God's assistance, against all the assaults of heresy—that is, "first, by the *authority of the Divine Law*, and then, by the *Tradition of the Catholic Church.*"† Never was there a time at which this rule was more necessary than at the present day, when old' heresies are daily reviving, new sects continually starting up, professing to be founded on *Scripture alone*, and new opinions constantly propagated, supported by a plausible application of Scripture language, "which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest unto their own destruction."

We now proceed to consider, more particularly, the *foundation* of the opinion held by Protestants, that the Bible contains the whole revealed Word of God. It is said, that, though Scripture could not have been the *first* Rule of Faith, yet all the doctrines of Christianity were *afterwards written* in the New Testament. This is indeed a most serious statement, involving the fundamental principles of Protestantism, and therefore we cannot accept it without distinct proofs derived from the express declarations of Christ or His Apostles. Where, then, is the proof? We are met with nothing but the bare *assertion* of human teachers, which we must decline to receive, in opposition to the clearest evidence to the contrary. There is not a word said about it in the New Testament itself, and therefore no proof can be derived from the Sacred Volume. It is almost unnecessary, then, to enter into a detailed examination of the various texts which

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\* S. Vincent. Lirin. Commonit. cap. xxv. xxvi. pp. 62, 67. (Oxon. 1836.)

† Ibid. cap. ii. p. 6.

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have been alleged in proof of the Sufficiency of Scripture, because there is not one of them which relates to the great question in dispute. These texts are totally inapplicable to the present controversy, for the following reasons:—1. They all refer to the *Old Testament*, and not to the *New Testament*. 2. They refer to *Jews*, and not to *Christians*. 3. They refer to a *part*, and not to the *whole* of Christianity. 4. They refer to *particular cases*, and not to *general principles*. 5. They refer only to the *usefulness*, and not to the *sufficiency*, of Scripture. 6. The Protestant interpretation of these texts is a mere novelty, contrary to all antiquity, as well as contrary to *other* texts of Scripture, which teach a *different* doctrine. 7. And finally, when Protestants attempt to show that these texts *may* be understood in their sense, it is sufficient for us to reply, that the Catholic Church understands them in a *different* sense, and consequently, that *their* interpretation must be founded on an *erroneous* principle. On all these grounds, we conclude that any support which may be derived from these texts is only *apparent* and not *real*, while the very context of these passages is generally sufficient to correct a view which is merely founded on the tradition of the 16th Century. In my published Letter, I referred to three principal texts which are usually quoted in favor of the Protestant view, and I may here add a few remarks, in reply to the strictures of my opponents.

1. The first of these texts is John v. 39. "*Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Me.*" I observe that my opponents are not agreed as to the *extent* of evidence to be derived from this passage. Dr. Gray attaches but little importance to it, as bearing on this subject. He says, (p. 53) "We wish it

to be clearly understood, that *we lay no stress* upon it as a proof of the Sufficiency of Holy Scripture as a rule of faith." But Mr. Hunter regards it as a complete demonstration of the Protestant principle. He says, (p. 32) "I maintain, on the authority of God's Word, that to say the Scriptures testify of Christ, is equivalent to saying that they do tell us *all we need for salvation*." Such is his *assertion*, but we look in vain for *proof* of the equivalent force of these two propositions. His argument, expressed in the form of a logical syllogism, stands thus:—

Whatever testifies of Christ, contains all things necessary to salvation.

But the Scriptures testify of Christ.

Therefore, the Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation.

Now the validity of this *conclusion* depends entirely on the truth of the *major* proposition; and it is evident that this statement cannot be sustained—otherwise it would apply to *every* book which contains any testimony concerning Christ. Thus it is true, in one sense, that Tacitus, the Roman heathen historian, testifies of Christ, as he bears witness to the reality of His death under Pontius Pilate, but who would venture to apply our Saviour's words to the Annals of Tacitus? And yet his testimony was direct and historical, while that of Scripture was only indirect and prophetic, as given through the medium of type and prediction. Even supposing these words to be addressed to the Jews in the form of a *command*, it is evident that they relate to a totally different case from that of Christians in the present day. The Jews *rejected* Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah, but they professed to receive the *Scriptures* as teaching the way of salvation; and our Saviour reasons with them *on their own principles*, and

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refers them to their own Scriptures for evidence *on this point*. But how does this prove that *every* revealed doctrine of Christianity is contained in the *New Testament*, of which there was not a word written at the time? And even if such a reference were possible, where is the proof? Suppose a question arose about any particular point of law, and the suggestion were made to the parties—"Search the Statutes, and you will find the required information in them"—would any one really infer from this suggestion, that it was the duty of *every* person to search the Statutes for full directions on every *other* subject of inquiry? And yet such is the general nature of the argument founded on our Saviour's advice to the Jews on this occasion. We find that He refers to *four* different testimonies of His divine mission. 1. The voice of God the Father, (v. 32, 37.) 2. The evidence of John the Baptist, (v. 33.) 3. That of his own miracles, (v. 36.) 4. That of the Scriptures, (v. 39.) Now, certainly, if this expression proves the sufficiency of *Scripture alone*, it equally proves the sufficiency of *each one* of the other three testimonies, for Scripture is only described as *one* of the *four*, and our Saviour applies the same precise terms to them all, when he says "they testify of Me." Besides, it has been thought, from the use of parallel forms of expression, that our Saviour's words, "in them ye *think* ye have eternal life," imply some *disapprobation* of this opinion of the Jews; but, even in the ordinary sense of the English term, there is nothing whatever inconsistent with the Catholic view, in this language. But it is curious to observe the *expansion* of the system, which Mr. Hunter founds on this simple declaration. He says, (p. 33) "these words of our Lord to the Jews will be found to contain a *most striking rebuke of Rome* and her tradition." And again, (p. 34)

“ He establishes conclusively that *no Church gives authority to Scripture*, but that the Bible is the Supreme Judge as to the teaching of any Church—that *all Tradition* is subject to the *written Word*—must be tried by it—received or rejected by it.” There is certainly a *development* of meaning here discovered, which no plain reader could have elicited from the text; but as this explanation has *not* the advantage of an *infallible* interpretation, we may be allowed to question the soundness of the exegetical principles, by which it is deduced from the words of our Divine Redeemer, in opposition to the doctrine of the Church.

2. The second of these texts is Acts xvii. 11,12. “ They received the word with all readiness of mind, and *searched the Scriptures* daily, whether those things were so; *therefore many of them believed.*” Now we do not find any thing in this account of the Berean Jews to warrant the inference which has frequently been drawn from it. Mr. Hunter says, (p. 35) “ It is most certainly not on this principle that Romanists act in reasoning with Protestants.” But St. Paul was not reasoning with *Protestants*, who profess to be *Christians*, but with *Jews*, who do *not* profess to be Christians, and Catholics *do* adopt the very same mode of argument still with Jews, in proving that Jesus of Nazareth was the true Messiah. And moreover, *it is* on this principle that Catholics act in reasoning with Protestants, in proof of the divine authority of the Church, which they reject. But Mr. Hunter adds, “ They do not test *every fact, every doctrine* taught them by their Church, with the touchstone of Scripture.” This is fully admitted, and when Mr. Hunter can show that St. Paul proved *every doctrine*—the Trinity, Baptism, Eucharist, and other Sacraments—to the Berean Jews *from the Old Testament*, then, and not till then, he

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may venture to draw a parallel between the teaching of St. Paul, and that of Protestants. We know that St. Paul constantly adapted his mode of teaching to the circumstances of his audience. In addressing a heathen assembly, as at Lystra and Athens, he would, of course, make no allusion to the Scriptures which they did not acknowledge; but in reasoning with a Jewish congregation, as at Thessalonica and Berea, he would strongly appeal to those Sacred Books, which they received as divine, in confirmation of the doctrine which he delivered to them. They "searched the Scriptures" of the Old Testament with earnest attention, to examine whether the passages quoted by St. Paul were really contained in the Writings of the Prophets, and having been fully satisfied on this point, and being enlightened by the grace of God, the consequence was, that "many of them believed." But *what* did they believe? Was it *only* what the Apostle was able to prove to them from the Old Testament? If this were the case, they could not even have believed his fundamental doctrine, that Jesus was the Christ, for it was *not written* there at all; and yet they received it and every other Christian doctrine taught by the Apostle, not because they found them in the Bible, but because they believed in the divine mission of St. Paul, and consequently in the divine authority of all the doctrines which he taught. It is evident that the Bereans "searched the Scriptures" in a very different manner from that now recommended by Protestants, for they were not yet Christians at this time, and therefore were bound to investigate all the evidence that was brought before them, including that of their own Scriptures, and being fully convinced that St. Paul was a teacher sent from God, they implicitly submitted to his instructions on every article of religion. Certainly the

Scriptures were, (as Dr. Gray says, p. 55) "the rule of faith with these men," but they were not the *only* rule of faith, otherwise it would have been quite unnecessary to believe any *additional* doctrines which were taught by St. Paul. It cannot be said that they believed nothing but what was already in their own Bible, for if so, they would have rejected the principal mysteries of the Christian Faith, which were *not revealed* in the Old Testament. Dr. Gray (p. 54) takes exception to the statement, that St. Paul's reference to Scripture related only to the *sufferings of Christ*. But surely this was the great subject of his preaching in every place—"Jesus Christ and Him Crucified"—and especially among the Jews, as we find in the context of this passage, just before, at Thessalonica, that St. Paul "reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging that *Christ must needs have suffered*, and risen again from the dead, and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ." (Acts xvii. 2, 3.) Indeed the very expression about "those things," evidently relates to the subject of this passage. But I do not lay much stress on this point, except to show that if he instructed them fully in the Gospel of Christ, he must have taught them many things that were *not* to be found in their own Scriptures, and that he commenced by teaching them the true meaning of those things that *were* to be found in them. The Jews verified his quotations, and "many of them believed" the doctrine of St. Paul on the ground of the fulfilment of prophecy—they were convinced on *this* ground, as others were on the ground of the *miracles* performed by the Apostle, for there were other occasions on which St. Paul did *not* appeal to Scripture at all, in reasoning with the Gentiles—and yet they believed on *other* grounds, and exercised the principle of divine faith in the Word

of God, without any reference to Scripture. We find that, in the same Chapter, St. Paul quotes "one of their own poets," in addressing the Athenian philosophers, and it is said that "certain men believed"—in each case adopting the same principle with our Lord Himself, in arguing from facts and documents admitted on both sides. *Scripture*, then, was *one* ground of conviction to unbelievers, as to the Jews at Borea—*miracles* were *another*, as to the heathen at Philippi—and even *philosophy* was *another*, as to the learned men at Athens—and thus each class of persons was influenced and persuaded by *different motives*, according to their previous opinions and circumstances, while the *object of faith* was the same with them all, as founded upon the doctrine delivered to them by St. Paul, which is known by the name of *Apostolical Tradition*. It must be remembered that St. Luke is not laying down any *general rules* in this passage, but merely stating *facts* which occurred in the propagation of Christianity. And yet this simple remark of the sacred historian is converted into a proof of the complete sufficiency of the Scriptures, independently of Apostolical Tradition, and of the right of every private Christian to examine every doctrine of Christianity proposed to them by the Church, and to judge of its truth or falsehood according to the standard of their own opinions as to the meaning of Scripture. But what connexion is there between the *text* and the Protestant *commentary* upon it? While therefore this passage may be taken as a proof that St. Paul's doctrine was "*according to the Scriptures*," it is impossible to infer from it, that *all* his doctrine was *contained in the Scriptures*, as the Apostles were sent into the world, not merely to *interpret* the Scriptures, but to announce a new *revelation* from God, including the most important doctrines which were not contained in the Scriptures.

3. But the third of these texts is 2 Tim. iii. 15—17. "From a child thou hast known the *Holy Scriptures*, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." This is undoubtedly the strongest passage that can be alleged in support of the Protestant view of Scripture. Indeed it is almost the only text that even seems, at first sight, to give any countenance to that view. Mr. Hunter regards it as affording an incontrovertible proof on this point. He says, (p. 36) "It contains a statement of our Protestant views regarding the *Sufficiency of Scripture* so clear—a rebuke of the pretences of Rome so powerful—that I feel it impossible to add to its effect by any explanation." Thus the question is settled at once, and it is conclusively proved that St. Paul was a sound Protestant, and strongly opposed to the corrupt doctrines of Rome; yet there are serious objections to this interpretation—for St. Paul is not speaking of *Scripture*, in the Protestant sense of the word, at all—nor does he make any assertion about the *Sufficiency* of Scripture for salvation. The Holy Scriptures, which Timothy learned in his childhood, consisted entirely of the *Old Testament*, for there was no other part of Scripture written at that time. We ask, then, Is the *New Testament necessary*, in order to instruct us in the doctrines of the Gospel? or is the *Old Testament sufficient* without it? It will surely be admitted by every professing Christian, that the New Testament is an indispensably necessary part of the Bible, as it is the only part of it which distinctly reveals to us the way of salvation. Does St. Paul, then, mean to say that the *Old Tes-*

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tament is *completely sufficient*, and consequently, that the *New Testament* is quite *unnecessary*? No Christian can for a moment suppose that this is his real meaning. And yet the words are capable of no other meaning, if the Protestant interpretation of his expressions be correct. Is not this, then, enough to show that there must be some serious mistake in supposing that St. Paul intended to teach such a doctrine, and consequently, that the attempted argument belongs to that class which logicians call *proving too much*, and therefore really *proves nothing* at all to the point! But Dr. Gray (p. 57) endeavors to show that this passage, though referring to the *Old Testament* alone, may be applied "*a fortiori*" to prove the complete sufficiency of "the *Old and New Testament* together." This is evidently, however, *begging the question*, as it is entirely founded on the assumed sufficiency of the *Old Testament*, which cannot be admitted without implying that Christianity was an unnecessary revelation. If, then, this passage cannot prove that the *Scriptures here* spoken of are sufficient, then it cannot prove that they would ever be *made* sufficient by the addition of *other* *Scriptures*; for it says nothing about *any addition ever* to be made to them at all. Besides, it should be remarked, that the expression "*all Scripture*" does not mean the *whole collection* of *Scripture*, but *every part* of *Scripture*, or each separate book of the *Old Testament*. That this is its true meaning is certain, both on grammatical and critical grounds of interpretation\*. But will any one maintain that *every particular book* of the *Bible* "*containeth all things necessary to salvation*"? Can this be true, for instance, of the *Book of Esther*, which never mentions the name of God, nor makes the slightest allusion to any religious doctrine whatever?

\* See Middleton on the Greek Article, pp. 137, 567. (Ed. 1808.)

If not, then the whole argument founded on this passage falls to the ground at once. But further, the word "*profitable*" conveys a very different meaning from that of "*sufficient*" or "*necessary*." St. Paul does *not* say that Scripture *alone* is sufficient, but that it is profitable and useful, not as an indispensable requisite, but as affording additional instruction and edification to the "man of God," who has already been taught the doctrines of the Gospel from *another* source, which is *presupposed* in the words of the text.\* But Dr. Gray actually denies (p. 57) "that there was anything in St. Paul's oral teaching, that is not contained in Scripture," and asserts that "such an intimation would be a contradiction to his own words," in proof of which, he refers to his language before Agrippa—"saying none other things than those which the Prophets and Moses did say should come," (Acts xxvi. 22) which he understands to mean that St. Paul taught nothing but what was contained in the Jewish Canon of Scripture. But this cannot be the Apostle's meaning, otherwise he would have omitted some of the most essential doctrines of Christianity, which could not be proved from the Old Testament. St. Paul specifies *three* of the doctrines which he taught;—the *death and resurrection of Christ*, and the *conversion of the Gentiles*,—which he declares had been foretold by Moses and the Prophets, and consequently, he asserts that his teaching on *these points* was in perfect *accordance* with the Jewish Scriptures; but, surely, he cannot mean to say that it was

\* Thus Hooker says—"When the Apostle therefore affirmeth unto Timothy that the Old [Testament] was able to make him wise to salvation, it was not his meaning that the Old ALONE can do this unto us which live sithence the publication of the New. For he speaketh with PRESUPPOSAL OF THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST known also unto Timothy; and therefore first it is said—"Continue thou in those things which thou hast learned and art persuaded, knowing of whom thou hast been taught them." His words concerning the books of ancient Scripture do not take place but with PRESUPPOSAL OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST embraced." (Eccles. Pol. Book I. chap. xiv.)



*exclusively derived* from the Scriptures, as he appeals, in the context, to an *additional revelation* which he had himself received from Christ, as the *source* of his own commission: just as the Catholic Church now asserts that her doctrines are in perfect accordance with the Scriptures, but not exclusively derived from them, as she appeals to the additional revelation which she has received from Christ, in the beginning of Christianity.

Such, then, is the evidence of these three important passages of the New Testament, and I do not hesitate to repeat my former conclusion, (*Letter*, p. 47) that "every one of them, in its immediate context, overturns the Protestant rule, because it refers to the teaching of our Lord and His Apostles, as the true ground of Christian Faith, quite distinct from, and in addition to the testimony of Scripture." They are, almost literally, the only texts that can be alleged as seeming to favor the Protestant view, but such an appearance is at once dispelled by an attentive examination of the passages themselves. And we may be allowed to ask, how is it possible that, if this was the real meaning of these texts, it was never discovered by any one before the Sixteenth Century? for we have no hesitation in asserting that there is not a single Christian author among all the Commentators on the Scriptures, for 1500 years after Christ, who ever held such an interpretation of these passages. It is now little more than 300 years since a new system of religion was introduced into the world, which, when reduced to some degree of consistency, professed to be founded on the principle of *rejecting every doctrine* of Christianity which *could not be proved*, to the satisfaction of each individual, to be contained in *certain primitive documents*, which had been collected and published by the Church under the title of "The New Testament."

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The Protestant Reformers regarded these texts, *interpreted by themselves*, as sufficient to establish this principle, in opposition to the authority of the Church, though such an interpretation was contrary, not only to the doctrine of the Church in every age, but to the express assertions of the Apostles themselves, in their own Epistles. In my former Letter, (p. 47) I referred to St. Paul's exhortation to his converts—"Stand fast, and hold the Traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our *Epistle*." (2 Thess. ii. 15.) Is not this, then, a *Scriptural* proof of the existence of *unwritten Traditions* in matters of faith? But Dr. Gray (p. 59) denies that these Traditions were *doctrines* or articles of faith, and he thinks that "the context proves that they were *directions about some matters of practice*." This is certainly a new interpretation, and the canon by which it is established is equally new. He refers to the *next Chapter* for an explanation of this term, where it is applied to a point of *discipline*, and he seems to regard this demonstration as perfectly conclusive, that "it has *nothing whatever* to do with what the Romish Church styles *articles of faith*, and which they profess to found upon *Apostolical Traditions*, so that the very corner-stone of the whole fabric crumbles as soon as you come to examine it." But again I assert, without fear of refutation, that *the context proves the very contrary*. For what is the subject of the whole Chapter in which this expression occurs? It begins with a reference to future events connected with the Second Advent of Christ—the great Apostacy, and the coming of Antichrist—for a more full account of which, the Apostle refers them to his own *oral teaching* among them, (verses 5 and 6), and then, in the verses immediately preceding this celebrated passage, he adds these memorable words, (v. 13, 14)—

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"God hath, from the beginning, chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, whereunto he called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." Does this language relate to *doctrine*, or not? There can be no doubt of it. And yet it is from *these doctrines* that he immediately draws the *inference*—"therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the *Traditions*," &c. What has this to do with the direction "not to eat the bread of others," to which Dr. Gray contends that the Apostle refers, by quoting a totally *different* part of the Epistle, and confounding *one kind* of Tradition with *another*?

Equally strange is Dr. Gray's confusion between two of St. Paul's Epistles, in which he denies (what no one asserts) that these Traditions were delivered exclusively to Timothy, and in order to prove this, refers (p. 59) *not* to St. Paul's Epistle to *Timothy himself*, but to a passage in his First Epistle to the *Corinthians*, in which he says nothing about Timothy, but addresses them as a collective body, without reference to any particular individual.

But Dr. Gray denies (p. 60) "that these Traditions were anything different from or more than we have recorded in the written Word." How does he prove this? We presume it will be admitted, that the *burden of proof* falls upon those who reject the received doctrine of the Church to assign satisfactory reasons for their rejection. We are referred, indeed, to Bishop Marsh's "Comparative View," the 4th Chapter of which relates to this subject, but its reasoning is entirely founded upon a *petitio principii*, and indeed it does not *profess* to establish anything beyond the bare *possibility* that all the Traditional doctrines of the Apostles *might* afterwards have been recorded in their Writings, or to the supposed *improbability* of their being transmitted to us through any *other* medium. But

surely the mere *possibility* of a thing is no proof of the *fact*, and we cannot admit it without the warrant of divine authority. It is certainly the highest act of presumption in us to *dictate* to the Almighty as to the proper *mode* of making His revelation to man, or to refuse to believe Him, unless the whole revelation is delivered to us *in writing* by the inspired Apostles. It is well remarked by Bishop Butler, with reference to another class of objections, that "we are not in any sort able to judge, whether it were to have been expected, that the revelation should have been *committed to writing*."\* Archdeacon Paley says—"I remember hearing an unbeliever say, that if God had given a revelation, He would have *written it in the skies*."† Is it, then, a sufficient reason to reject any part of divine revelation, because it does not come to us exactly in that way which *we* might have anticipated from natural reason, or even expected from some general intimations of Scripture itself? It may be asked, then, *on what authority* do we receive the *unwritten* Traditions of the Apostles? We answer, on the *same* authority as that on which we receive their *written* Traditions contained in the *Canon of Scripture*—that is, the *divine authority of the Church*. The Canon of Scripture itself, or List of Canonical Books, is only *one* of these Apostolical Traditions. Both the *written* and *unwritten* Traditions have come down to us on the *same ground*, and if private judgment is exercised in rejecting the *one*, the foundation of the *other* will also be undermined.

But Dr. Gray maintains, not only that the Bible is perfectly sufficient, but (p. 61) that "any one of the four parts

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\* Butler's Analogy, Part II. Chap. III. The title of the Chapter is very instructive—"Of our incapacity of judging, what were to be expected in a Revelation; and the credibility, from analogy, that it must contain things appearing liable to objections."

† Paley's Evidences, Part III. Chap. vi. Sect. 1.

of the New Testament may, under the blessing of God, conduct a man to salvation." We admit the possibility of it, in the *same sense* as that in which Timothy was made wise unto salvation by the Old Testament, not as containing all necessary truth, but as preparing the mind for the reception of it from the proper source of instruction. In any *other* sense we deny it. Take, for instance, the Acts of the Apostles. Where will he find, in this book, any statement of the doctrine of the Trinity, Incarnation, Original Sin, or other essential truths of the Gospel? Are these *fundamental* points, or not? If they *are*, then it cannot be true that a book which omits them contains all things necessary to salvation. If they *are not*, then it must be confessed, that there is no fundamental point of faith in Christianity. However, Dr. Gray seems to think his position proved by a reference to John xx. 31. "These are *written that ye might believe*" &c. Now what is the subject of this passage? It is evident from the preceding verse, that St. John is only referring to the *miracles* of our Lord, as the proof of His divine mission, and not to the *doctrines* which are recorded in his Gospel or in any other part of Scripture. In fact, if this argument proves anything, it *proves too much*, for St. John here speaks of *his own* Gospel, as distinguished from the *others*, and declares that its design was to afford sufficient evidence for believing in Christ and His doctrines. Does St. John's Gospel profess to contain a full account of those doctrines? There is nothing expressly mentioned in it about the Birth or Ascension of Christ, about Original Sin or the Atonement, about Baptism or the Lord's Supper. These and other doctrines are implied or presupposed, but not directly asserted in it. And is it sufficient to eternal life to "believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God"? Certainly it is, in the

*true sense* of the words. But is it not evident that these and other comprehensive expressions are frequently used in Scripture, as including the *whole* Christian character, by referring to its *vital principle* of faith in Christ? And it may be added, that St. Augustine's remark upon this text (quoted by Dr. Gray in the note) exactly harmonizes with this view, as he is referring solely to the *miracles* of our Lord, in connexion with the resurrection of Lazarus, as proving His divine mission, and he makes no statement whatever with regard to the *doctrines* contained in St. John's Gospel.\*

Dr. Cramp, like Dr. Gray, comes to the conclusion, (p. 56) "that the Scriptures, and the Scriptures only, are the rule of faith and practice." This principle is evidently *assumed* without proof, and made the foundation of *every objection to Catholic doctrine*. But he adds that "*no one knows* whether the Apostles delivered any instructions to the Churches, designed to be of perpetual obligation, which are not *embodied in their writings*." He seems to admit, then, that there is *no proof to the contrary*, though he thinks that "the presumption is in the negative." This "presumption" is established by the following considerations. "We are warranted in the conviction that the Holy Spirit guided them in *writing*, as He did in *speaking*." Most certainly—and what follows from this? that *all* their doctrines, *both written and spoken*, are of perpetual obligation, as having proceeded from the same Holy Spirit. This is the logical inference, but it is not the one drawn by Dr. Cramp, for he finishes the sentence with this conclusion—"so that the *New Testament* constitutes a *complete and sufficient* body of Christian law." But where is the *connexion* between the *premises* and the *conclusion*? the *former* contain a pro-

\* S. Aug. Opp. Tom. III. Pars II. p. 618. (Ed. Ben.)

position relating to the *whole* doctrine of the Apostles, delivered *in writing and in speaking*, whereas the *latter* relates only to the *written part*, the New Testament. This is surely an instance of sophistical reasoning, by making a *part* equal to the *whole*. And yet he goes on to argue on the same principle, that because the Spirit was given to the Apostles to guide them into all truth, *therefore* their *writings* contain all that is "needful for the wants of the Churches." He appears, however, to be conscious of the inconclusiveness of this argument, and therefore he discloses to us the true secret of his opposition to the principle of Apostolical Tradition. "We are convinced that if we should appeal to Christian antiquity, on the supposition that Apostolic plans and usages had been handed down from the beginning, a *principle* would be admitted which *would lead us straight to Rome.*" Very true—this is just the conclusion he wishes to avoid, and therefore he objects to the *principles* which lead to it, not so much for their *unsoundness*, as for their *tendency*. "For who" he asks, "can *distinguish* between the presumed *Apostolic* custom and the new *invention*?" We answer, *the Church of Christ*, whose office it is, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to distinguish between truth and error on every subject, and without which there is no possibility of distinguishing between them, except from mere conjecture and private opinion, which can never satisfy the soul that is really desirous to find the way of truth and peace.

Dr. Gray argues (p. 62) like Bishop Marsh, against the supposed doctrine, "that an all-wise Providence would have committed these things to so precarious a vehicle as that of oral Tradition." But it must be remembered that we have the *promise of Christ* for the

perpetual preservation of His truth in the Church, quite *independent* of any particular *medium*; further, these *Traditional* doctrines have been committed to *writing* from the earliest ages, though not recorded in the Works of the *Apostles themselves*; besides which, they are attested by the *external monuments* which still remain from the most ancient times, while even the *heresies* which have arisen at different periods have only served to exhibit more clearly the true doctrine of the Church by its *dogmatic definitions* in opposition to them. It has been said, that the *principle* of Apostolical *Tradition* opens a door for the admission of further *corruptions* of doctrine under this venerable name; but the *same* objection equally applies to *Scripture*, as there have been *spurious* writings frequently circulated under the name of Scripture; yet still we believe that there are *true Scriptures* as well as *true Traditions*, and both of them separated from *false Scriptures* and *false Traditions* by the same authority, which Christ has established in His Church.

It may be here remarked, that the following rules are laid down by Cardinal Bellarmine, for ascertaining the *genuine* Apostolical Traditions of the Church, and distinguishing them from all *spurious* imitations. Such a doctrine is to be esteemed true—“1. When the *whole Church* embraces any thing as a *dogma of faith*, which is not found in the Sacred Scriptures. 2. When the *whole Church* observes any thing *which no one could appoint but God*, and which is not found in the written Word. 3. What has been observed in the *whole Church*, and in all past times, *although* it is of such a nature, that it *might* have been appointed by the Church. 4. When *all the Doctors of the Church* teach with common consent, whether assembled in a General Council, or



writing separately in books, that any particular article *has come down from Apostolical Tradition.* 5. Whatever is regarded as an *Apostolical Tradition* in those Churches in which there is a complete and continued succession from the Apostles."\* It is obvious, however, that these rules are merely intended to point out the general principles on which *the Church* has acted in the definition of Christian doctrine, and cannot be supposed to be of practical application to private individuals; as *every article* of the Catholic Faith is clearly *fixed and settled* by the voice of Tradition, and is briefly comprehended in the *Creed of the Roman Church*, commonly called the Creed of Pope Pius IV. while every *doubt* that can arise as to the true *interpretation* of these doctrines on any points of controversy is continually *decided* by the living voice of the chief Pastor of the Universal Church.

I shall now proceed to offer some observations on the *other* great division of the Catholic Rule of Faith, relating to the CANON OF SCRIPTURE, and the foundation of the *distinction* between the *Canonical* and *Apocryphal* Books of the Old and New Testament. It is evident, in fact, that this distinction *presupposes* the divine authority of *Apostolical Tradition*, independently of the Bible. For, surely, the Canon of Scripture is an article of *faith*, and faith can rest only on the *Word of God*—yet there is nothing about the Canon of Scripture in the *written* Word, and consequently it must be founded on the *unwritten* Word, by which alone we can have any satisfactory *proof* of the divine inspiration of the Scriptures. It is clear, then, that Protestants are obliged to admit the necessity of Tradition for proving this *one* point, while they deny its application in any *other*, and yet in this admission they act contrary to their own fundamental prin-

\* Bellarm. De Controv. Tom. I. p. 76. (Ed. Col. Agr. 1615.)

ciple, that *Scripture alone is sufficient*; besides which, it must be observed, that if Tradition is a sufficient warrant for receiving the Canon of Scripture, it must surely be sufficient for receiving *any other* doctrines which have been proposed by the *same* authority.

It is, then, a very important subject to consider—What is the Bible? of what *books* is it composed? and how may its *inspiration* be proved? Protestants often speak on this subject as if the Bible were a book which had fallen down directly from heaven, in its present English Version, as the only faithful representative of the original. It is a common thing to speak of the New Testament, as if it were as old as Christianity itself; whereas it is certain that, though various parts of it were universally received at an earlier period, still it was not in existence, as a *collection* of inspired writings, for 400 years after the commencement of Christianity. It is therefore necessary to remember that the Bible is not, strictly speaking, *one* book, but consists of a great number of *separate* productions, which have been collected and arranged, and finally printed and bound together in one Volume, under this convenient title, by which it is distinguished from all other books in the world. By what *authority*, then, was this collection made, and how do we know that it contains, neither more nor less than, the *whole Canon* of Scripture?

It should be observed, that there are *two distinct questions* relating to this subject, which, though they rest on different grounds among Protestants, are inseparably connected on the principles of the Catholic Church. One of these relates to the doctrine of *Divine Inspiration*, and the other to the *Canonical Books* of Scripture. The first of these is *general*, and the second is *particular*. The one means, How do we know that *any book* in the world

is divinely inspired? and the other means, How do we know that the collection of books which we call *the Bible*, is divinely inspired? Now we need not enter into the former question, as it relates rather to the controversy with Infidels than with Protestants, the latter of whom appear to agree with us in the general idea of the nature and extent of inspiration, though many of them, in Germany and other countries, have reduced it to a kind of religious enthusiasm, in some degree under divine influence, but not always securing the writers from error either in facts or in doctrines.

But the most important practical question is the second aspect of this subject, to which we now proceed, not so much for the purpose of *proving* the Canon of Scripture, as of *testing* the principles involved in the *method of proof* adopted by those who reject the infallible authority of the Church, and which, as being founded on the exercise of private judgment, must always lead to uncertain and contradictory conclusions in the determination of a question, which, on Protestant principles, lies at the very foundation of all religion.

In proof of the Canon of Scripture, it is usual for Protestants to refer to the words of St. Paul—"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," &c., (2 Tim. iii. 16).<sup>\*</sup> But it must be observed, that this passage is taken from the *New Testament*, the inspiration of which must *first* be proved, before we can apply any argument from it in proof of the *rest* of Scripture. Further, it is evident that this text determines nothing whatever on this point, as

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<sup>\*</sup> "All Scripture, divinely inspired, is profitable" &c. This is the translation of the Latin Vulgate and other ancient Versions, and was adopted by all the old English Protestant Versions, Wiclif's, Tyndale's, Coverdale's, and Cranmer's; and has been approved by several Protestant Commentators; so that the statement of the Apostle has no reference whatever to the settlement of the Canon of Scripture.

it does not define what *Scripture* is, nor decide *what books* are included under the name of Scripture, and therefore the Canon must be previously settled, before we can apply these words to any particular book, especially as it does not appear that they refer to the New Testament at all. Indeed, the only Scriptural allusion to any part of the New Testament occurs in the Second Epistle of St. Peter, (chap. iii. 15, 16) in which the Apostle refers to St. Paul's Epistles in general terms, and classes them among the "other Scriptures;"† but we cannot suppose that even this part of the New Testament could have been fixed by the authority of this passage, as there is no *enumeration* of St. Paul's writings given here, and besides, this Epistle of St. Peter *itself* was one of the last admitted into the Canon of Scripture.

It might be supposed, indeed, that such an important question as the Canon of Scripture, would have been settled by the Apostles themselves; but we know that such is not the fact, as it is never mentioned in Scripture, and it is contrary to all historical evidence on this subject. How, then, do we know *what books* are *divinely inspired*, and what books are *not*? Some writers appeal to the *miracles and prophecies* recorded in the various books of Scripture as a proof of their inspiration. This is the ground usually taken by the authors of works on the Evidences of Christianity. But there are several books admitted to be inspired, which contain *no* such record; and besides, it is obvious that there is a wide difference between the *divine mission* of a *person* who *proves* his authority by miracles and prophecies, and the *divine inspiration* of a *book* which merely *relates* the facts. The one does not include the other. A book is not inspired

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† It is possible, however, that 1 Tim. v. 18 may refer to Luke x. 7.

merely because it contains a true account of the life and actions of an inspired person. The Life of our Blessed Saviour has been written by a multitude of authors, but surely it cannot be inferred, from this circumstance, that all such books are divinely inspired. His Life has been written by the Four Evangelists, but none of them *professes* to be inspired, and none of them even affixes his name to the Gospel written by him. It is true that the Apostles received a divine commission from our Blessed Lord, but two of the Evangelists were *not* Apostles; and besides, this commission does not necessarily extend to the divine inspiration of all their *writings*, as our Saviour gave them no command on this subject.

Others rest their belief in the inspiration of Scripture on some *internal evidence* derived from sublimity of doctrine, or majesty of style, in the sacred writers, from which they argue that it is impossible to suppose that such persons could have been enthusiasts or impostors. But this is altogether another question, as there is a wide difference between the divine origin of *Christianity*, and the divine origin of the *Writings* in which its doctrines are recorded; the authenticity of the *facts* is quite distinct from the authority of the *book* itself, and it must be remembered also, that the claim to inspiration forms no part of the pretensions of these writers *themselves*.\* Closely connected with this idea, is the method adopted by others, who appeal to their own *personal consciousness*, or internal persuasion, as a sufficient ground of conviction,

\* Thus Michaelis attempts to prove the Inspiration of the Writings of the Apostles, from the general promises of Christ given to them; but this attempt must be regarded as a total failure, as the proof has no real connexion with the subject. Besides, as the promises were given to the APOSTLES ONLY, he consistently limits the Canonical authority of the New Testament to those Books written by the Apostles themselves, and accordingly rejects the inspiration of St. Mark and St. Luke. (Introd. to N. T. Vol. I. p. 78-97.)

which they believe to be the work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts, bearing testimony both to the Inspiration and to the Canon of Scripture.\* But, however strong this internal feeling may be as a proof to the persons *themselves*, it can be no proof to *others*, and unless supported by a direct revelation, it may be merely a religious delusion. Yet this is the proof of Inspiration adopted by the Presbyterians, in opposition to the authority of the Church, and taught in the Westminster Confession and in the Larger Catechism.† And it seems to be the ground chiefly taken by Dr. Gray, (p. 64) and by Dr. Cramp, (p. 87) as well as by pious Protestants, generally, in the present day.

Still, however, there are others who attempt to settle the question by an appeal to *historical evidence*, or the testimony of the ancient Church, and we must, therefore, examine this mode of proof more particularly, though it must be remembered that, whatever may be the result of an investigation conducted on this prin-

\* Michaelis honestly declares—"With respect to that inward sensation, I must confess that I have never experienced it in the whole course of my life; nor are those persons who have felt it, either deserving of envy, or nearer the truth, since the Muhammedan feels it as well as the Christian." (Introd. to N. T. Vol. I. p. 78.)

† We find the following question and answer in this Catechism.

"Q. 4. How doth it appear that the Scriptures are the Word of God?"

"A. The Scriptures manifest themselves to be the Word of God, by their majesty and purity; by the consent of all the parts, and the scope of the whole, which is to give all glory to God; by their light and power to convince and convert sinners, to comfort and build up believers unto salvation: but the Spirit of God bearing witness by and with the Scriptures in the heart of man, is alone able fully to persuade it that they are the very Word of God."

Now we fully admit that these circumstances afford a strong PRACTICAL CONFIRMATION of the Inspiration of Scripture to those who are ALREADY CONVINCED of it on OTHER GROUNDS—but we utterly deny that they constitute any satisfactory proofs in themselves. Indeed the former part of this answer applies to all pious writings, of human composition, and forms no evidence of the INSPIRATION of the book, as these effects are produced by the DOCTRINES of Christianity, and not by the BOOKS in which they are contained. The latter part of the answer, relative to "the witness of the Spirit," is totally inapplicable to the Canon of Scripture, as the texts, which are quoted in the Catechism, have no reference whatever to this subject.

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ciple, *historical evidence* is not *infallible authority*, which must be admitted to be necessary to establish this point of *faith* on a firm *foundation*. This is evidently the ground taken by the Church of England, as it is explained in the 6th Article—"In the name of the Holy Scripture we do understand those Canonical Books of the Old and New Testament, *of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church.*" It should be remarked, that this was not *originally* a part of the Article, as it was drawn up in the time of Edward VI. which contained *no Catalogue* of the Canonical Books of Scripture, the whole of this portion having been added in the time of Elizabeth\*, and this particular clause was taken *verbatim* from the Lutheran Confession of Wirtemberg compiled by John Brentz, and presented to the Council of Trent in the year 1552†. Bishop Burnet undertakes to prove the Canon of the New Testament from two sources—1. The *quotations* made from it by Christian Writers of the First and Second Centuries. 2. The *Catalogues* of these Books, published in the Third and Fourth Centuries‡. Granting, however, the sufficiency of this mode of proof, it must be remarked, that both these grounds are, *in point of fact*, utterly inconclusive for we find that several Books are *entirely omitted* in these quotations, and the Catalogues *do not agree* among themselves, as we shall presently see more fully. It need hardly be added, that Burnet's account of the quotations of particular books in the Works of the early Fathers is extremely inaccurate, as may be seen at once by comparing the passages supposed to be cited (which will be found in any good Index of their Works) with the original texts of Scripture. Now the difficulty involved in the

\* See Sparrow's Collection, pp. 42, 92. (Ed. 1675.)

† Le Plat, Monum. Conell. Trident. Tom. iv. p. 452.

‡ Burnet's Exposition of the Articles—Art. vi.

statement of the 6th Article has been felt by all the Expositors of these Formularies, but it has been only *evaded*, as it is impossible to *remove* it. The difficulty is this, that it is *not true* that there was never any controversy in the Church about the Canonical authority of the Books received by the Church of England, and thus the *former* part of the Article is *contradicted* by the *latter*, which declares that "all the Books of the New Testament, *as they are commonly received*, we do receive, and account them Canonical"—though it is well known that several of these Books were *doubted* and rejected in the Church in early times; and if the Church of England had acted consistently with this rule, she would have rejected those Books from the Canon of Scripture. She has *accepted* the Canon of the *New Testament*, as ratified by the authority of Pope Innocent I. in the beginning, and afterwards, of Pope Gelasius I. in the end, of *the Fifth Century*, and yet she has *rejected* the Canon of the *Old Testament*, ratified by the *same authority*, though they both rest on the *same historical evidence*, as to their reception in the Christian Church.

Dr. Gray refers (p. 70) to *six* Catalogues of the Books of the New Testament in the Fourth Century, which exactly agree with our present Canon, but he does not mention the fact, that there are *six other* Catalogues of these books in the same Century, of equal respectability, which do *not* agree with our Canon. These are the Catalogues of Eusebius of Cæsarea\*, St. Cyril of Jerusalem†, St. Gregory Nazianzen‡, St. Gregory Nyssen§, Philaster of Brixia§, and the Council of Laodicea, all of

\* Euseb. Hist. Eccles. Lib. III. cap. xxv. p. 184, (Ed. 1822.)

† S. Cyril. Catech. Lib. iv. § 36.—Opp. p. 69, (Ed. Ben.)

‡ S. Greg. Naz. Carm. xxxiii.—Opp. Tom. ii. (Ed. Par. 1840.)

§ See Marsh's Michaelis, Vol. IV. p. 490.

§ Philastr. De Hæres. 87. (Bibl. Max. Patr. Tom. v.)



which omit the Apocalypse, while one of them also omits the Epistle to the Hebrews, and another of them classes *five other* Epistles among the *disputed* books. It is evident, then, that there was no universal agreement in the Church of the Fourth Century, as to the Canon of Scripture.

Dr. Cramp says (p. 22) that "we receive the New Testament, not on the authority of the Council of Carthage, or of any other Council, but on independent grounds." He then proceeds to describe the nature of these grounds—"We are satisfied that the books of which it is composed were written by those whose names they bear, and that they wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Very well—so are we; but we have here no intimation of the *grounds* on which "we are satisfied" of these truths. As to "those whose names they bear," the greater part of the New Testament (as well as of the Old) is entirely *anonymous*, and bears the names of *no authors* whatever. We have no information from the *books themselves*, as to the *names* of the persons who wrote the Four Gospels, Acts of the Apostles, and several of the Epistles. We only know it from Tradition, and if this Tradition be perfectly correct, it does not prove that they were all *inspired* to write those books. There is no good reason, on this ground, why the writings of St. Barnabas and St. Clement\* should not be admitted into the Canon, as well as those of St. Mark and St. Luke. It cannot be decided from history who wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews, so that the *Canonical* authority of these books does not depend on the *names* of the

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\* Archbishop Wake regarded them and the other Apostolical Fathers as *inspired* men, (See his Prelim. Disc. Chap. x. § 11, 23) though their Writings were not of *CANONICAL* authority. The learned Whiston, however, admitted them all into the Canon of the New Testament, together with the Apostolical Constitutions, and other books.

authors. There is no *internal* evidence that "they wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." They do not say so *themselves*. St. Peter, indeed, uses this expression with reference to the Prophets of the *Old Testament*, but he does not apply it to any *other Sacred Writings*, and it is evidently *assuming* the whole question to include any others in this description\*. How, then, do we know that they were inspired, and that we have their genuine Writings? Because the Church of Rome has so decided *by divine authority*, and Protestants themselves have no other grounds of faith in the inspiration of the New Testament. But there is another proof adduced by Dr. Cramp. He says that "the Canon of the New Testament has been abundantly confirmed and honored by the Holy Spirit," because "it contains the truth by which the Spirit operates on the hearts of sinners in conversion, and sanctifies and sustains believers"; from which he concludes that "it is manifestly God's Word, and challenges our most hearty submission." But, however correct this *conclusion* certainly is, the *reasoning itself* is evidently founded on a mistake. For such supernatural effects are not produced by the *Canon* of the New Testament, but by its *doctrines* applied to the heart by the Spirit of God, and therefore they can form no proof of the divine origin of the *book itself*, but of the *saving truths* which it contains, for if these spiritual effects were a sufficient proof of inspiration, the same mode of proof might surely be applied to *every pious book*, and to every zealous preacher of the Gospel, who always aims at producing the same effects.

\* Mr. Hunter, however, asserts (p. 11) that St. Peter himself was NOT INFALLIBLE. If so, then it follows that his WRITINGS were not infallible; and if HE was not infallible, it cannot surely be supposed that ANY OTHER of the Apostles was infallible, and consequently THEIR Writings could not have been infallible. Such a principle, then, tends directly to SUBVERT the Infallibility or INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES of the New Testament.

Dr. Cramp refers (p. 25) to the high respect for Scripture entertained by the primitive Christians, as evinced by the frequent quotations of the Sacred Writings in the Works of the early Fathers, from which he seems to infer that they were regarded by them as the *only* Rule of Faith.\* The *fact* alleged is certainly correct, but how does it warrant the *conclusion* which has been founded upon it? Surely the reference to *one* part of revelation does not exclude *another* part, and especially when we have their own explanations to correct such a view. Every true Catholic loves and venerates the Sacred Scriptures as one of the most precious gifts of God to His Church, but he is fully convinced that the *whole* Word of God is entitled to his grateful obedience, as well as that *part* of it which was committed to *writing*; and therefore he knows that it would be an act of injury to the integrity of God's Word to attempt to exalt *one* part of it by depreciating the *other*. It is one of the highest privileges bestowed upon the Catholic Church, that to her, as to the Jews of old, "were committed the oracles of God"; and we shall now proceed to consider, more

\* In illustration of this statement, Dr. Cramp (p. 25) adds a "singular fact"—which is, "that scanty as are the Works of Christian Authors during the first three Centuries, the whole of the New Testament might be recovered from them" in consequence of the multiplicity of their quotations. This is, indeed, a curious and interesting point—but I must say that the facts of the case are vastly exaggerated. It is stated that Lord Hailes "actually discovered the whole New Testament from those Writings, except 7 or 11 verses" Now there must be some extraordinary mistake here, as I have myself been lately engaged in a similar investigation, and I must confess that the result of my researches is very different. It is doubtful whether there is any quotation from the 2d Epistle of St. Peter, while there appears to be only one passage cited from the Epistle of St. James, during this period. There is no quotation from the 3d Epistle of St. John. Even from the Acts of the Apostles, all the passages quoted do not include one-fifth part of the Book, and only one-third part of the Apocalypse could be recovered in this way. The most numerous quotations occur in the Works of Origen, then Tertullian, next Cyprian, Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, and Justin Martyr. Instead of 7 or 11 verses in the whole New Testament, I find that there are upwards of 800 verses in the Acts alone, which are entirely omitted in their quotations by all the Fathers of the first three Centuries, from Barnabas to Lactantius.

particularly, the true state of the question as to the Canon of Scripture, with reference to Protestant objections.

The Books of Scripture are usually divided by Catholic divines into two classes, which are distinguished by the names of "*Proto-Canonical*" and "*Deutero-Canonical*"; not that there is any difference between them as to the degree of their inspiration, but simply for the sake of treating the subject with greater *perspicuity*. The first class includes those whose authority was *always acknowledged* in the Church, but the second class consists of those which were *not* universally received into the Canon, in ancient times. The Deutero-Canonical Books of the Old Testament consist of Esther, together with the "other books" enumerated in the 6th Article of the English Church, commonly called Apocryphal by Protestants—with the exception of the Third and Fourth Books of Esdras, and the Prayer of Manasses, which are not included in the Catholic Canon. The same class of books in the New Testament consists of St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistle of St. James, the Second Epistle of St. Peter, the Second and Third Epistles of St. John, the Epistle of St. Jude, and the Revelation of St. John, together with the following portions—Mark xvi. 9—20; Luke xxii. 43, 44; John viii. 1—11; and 1 John v. 7, 8. *Both* these lists of sacred books are received by Catholics; but the *former* are *rejected*, whilst the *latter* are *accepted*, by Protestants. Now the only Council quoted by Protestant divines in support of their Canon of the Old Testament, is that of Laodicea, supposed to be held about the middle of the Fourth Century\* ; but even this

\* The exact date of this Council is unknown. It is assigned to various years, from 314 till 399. Baronius refers it to the former year, but Beveridge places it in 365.

Paley remarks—"Probably the Decree of this Council rather declared than

Council expressly includes Baruch, and the Epistles of Jeremiah, which are rejected by Protestants. In like manner, as to individual writers, we find that Melito, Athanasius, and Gregory Nazianzen, omit the Book of Esther, while the first of them seems to include the Book of Wisdom, and the second maintains the inspiration of the History of Susanna.

But I must briefly allude to the two strongest testimonies of the Fathers that can be adduced in favor of the Protestant Canon. They are the statements of two Presbyters of the Latin Church, at the end of the Fourth Century—the one, St. Jerome, author of the Vulgate Translation of the Bible—and the other, (his intimate friend and afterwards his bitter enemy) Rufinus, of Aquileia. My opponents have not failed to enlist them on their side—the former being quoted by Dr. Cramp, (p. 9), and the latter by Dr. Gray, (p. 82.) It is difficult, indeed, to ascertain the precise views of St. Jerome on this subject. But it may be remarked, that much confusion has arisen from the want of attention to the meaning of “Canonical” Scripture, as used by ancient Christian writers, in distinction from “Apocryphal” writings. The former term is employed simply with reference to those books which were placed *in the Canon* of the Church, while it is by no means intended to deny that the latter were divine or inspired, but merely that the Church had not *formally pronounced* upon their claims. It has been thought, indeed, that St. Jerome only meant to assert that these books were not in the *Jewish Canon* of Scripture\*; but even admitting that he referred to

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regulated the public judgment, or, more properly speaking, the judgment of some neighboring Churches; the Council itself consisting of no more than 30 or 40 Bishops of Lydia and the adjoining countries. Nor does its authority seem to have extended further.”—(Evidences of Christianity, Part I. Chap. ix. 6.)

\* Dixon's Introduction to S. S. Vol. I. p. 40. (Am. Ed.)

the Canon of the Church, it will not follow that he regarded them merely as human writings. Even his testimony, quoted in the 6th Article, evidently places them on a very different ground. And further, we find that he himself quotes some of them as the other Scriptures among his own works, and he states that the Book of Judith is said to have been placed on the Canon of Scripture by the Council of Nice.\* Moreover, it seems strange, indeed, that his testimony, if it were really contrary to the present Canon, should be prefixed to all the modern printed editions of the Latin Vulgate, and circulated by the Catholic Church with her own authorised copies of the Bible. Rufinus divides the Sacred Books into *three* classes—Canonical, Ecclesiastical, and Apocryphal.† In the *first* class he places those books which are now called *Proto-Canonical*; in the *second* class, immediately after the passage quoted by Dr. Gray, the *Deutero-Canonical*, which, he expressly states, were appointed to be publicly read in the Churches; while in the *third* class he enumerates some *spurious* Writings, which were universally rejected, and forbidden to be read in the Churches. But there is a remarkable circumstance, which more clearly explains his views on this subject. It appears that he strongly censured St. Jerome for omitting some of the books of the *second* class in his Edition of the Scriptures, and charges him with pillaging the deposit of the Holy Ghost, which the Apostles had delivered to the Churches, and which, he states particularly, St. Peter had delivered to the Church of Rome during the time of his Episcopate‡. Now he surely could not have advanced such a charge, if he had supposed them destitute of inspired authority, while St.

\* Pref. in Judith.

† Expos. in Symbol. Apostol. (Inter Opp. S. Cypriani, Tom. II. p. 336. Ed. 1782.)

‡ Invectiv. in Hieron. Lib. II. (Inter Opp. S. Hieron. Tom. IV. cœl. 446. Ed. Ben.)

Jerome's own apology throws further light on their opinions, as he declares that in that part of his work, he expresses the sentiments of the *Hebrews*, and *not his own*.\* It is evident, then, that the word "Canonical" is not used by these writers in the same sense as in modern times, and that they considered other books as entitled to the highest veneration, though they had not yet been finally sanctioned by the authority of the Church. It is plain, also, that the word "Apocryphal" is used by St. Jerome and by Rufinus in a *different* sense—by the former, as distinguished from *Canonical*, by the latter, as distinguished both from *Canonical and Ecclesiastical*—and thus we find that St. Jerome describes these books as Apocryphal, while Rufinus expressly *distinguishes* them from Apocryphal. And as to the testimonies of the Fathers, we find these books quoted like the other Scriptures, long before St. Jerome's time, by St. Barnabas, St. Clement of Rome, St. Irenæus, St. Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, and especially by St. Cyprian, (who cites more than 100 passages from them) while in modern times they are received as Canonical Scripture by the Greek Church, and even by the Protestant Church of England until the reign of Elizabeth. Indeed Bishop Cosin, while defending the Protestant Canon, expressly asserts that "the ancient Fathers have often cited these controverted books, some under the name of Divine Scriptures, and others under the title of Prophetical Writings."†

As to the Deutero-Canonical portions of the *New Testament*, it is well known that they are now received by all classes of professing Christians, and therefore Protestants are very inconsistent in rejecting similar portions

\* *Contra Rufin. Lib. II. (Opp. Tom. IV. col. 431.)*

† *Cosin's Canon of Scripture. p 92. (Ed. 1683.)*

of the Old Testament on the ground of early doubts in the Church, when these doubts apply to the *one* as well as to the *other*. The earliest Catalogue of Books in the Canon of the New Testament is contained in several of the lost works of Origen, (A.D. 230) from which, however, (though it is incomplete,) some extracts have been preserved by Eusebius\*, which will be referred to under the respective books. The next Catalogue is that Eusebius himself, (A.D. 320) who has given us a most valuable List of the Books of the New Testament, as received in his own time. He says—"First, we are to place the Four Gospels, which are followed by the Acts of the Apostles. After this, we are to enumerate the Epistles of Paul†, then the First Epistle of John, and also that of Peter. After these we are to add, if it should seem proper, the Revelation of John, concerning which we shall state the various opinions in another place. So much, then, for those that are *generally received*. But of those that are *disputed*, though acknowledged by many, are those called the Epistle of James, and that of Jude, and the Second Epistle of Peter, also the Second and Third of John, whether written by John the Evangelist, or by another person of the same name. Among the *spurious* books we are to place the Acts of Paul, and that entitled the Shepherd, and the Revelation of Peter, also the Epistle of Barnabas, and the Institutes of the Apostles, also, as I said before, the Revelation of John, if it seem proper, which some, as I said, reject and others admit among those generally received. To these some add the Gospel according to the Hebrews."‡

\* Euseb. Eccles. Hist. Lib. VI. Cap. xxv. p. 431. (Ed. 1822.)

† In another place he mentions Fourteen Epistles of St. Paul. (Eccles. Hist. Lib. III. Cap. iii. p. 134.)

‡ Eccles. Hist. Lib. III. Cap. xxv. p. 183.



We may add a few remarks with regard to the *particular books* contained in the Deutero-Canonical portion of the New Testament.

We find that, even in the latter part of the 4th Century, St. Jerome says that "the Latins do not commonly receive the Epistle to the Hebrews among the Canonical Scriptures."\* Dr. Gray observes (p. 70) that "the Church of Rome excluded the Epistle to the Hebrews from the Canon, but afterwards, when Infallibility was more *developed*, admitted it." But this statement is quite inaccurate. The only authority for it is the passage of St. Jerome just quoted, and the language of Eusebius, in which he refers to the opinions of certain persons, that the Roman Church did not regard it as a genuine Epistle of Paul†, but he afterwards qualifies this statement by saying that among *some* of the Romans it is not considered to be the Apostle's‡; but this is not a *public declaration of the Church*, and was never so defined by authority; and indeed Professor Stuart says that "the Church of Rome made repeated appeals to it as a book of divine authority,"§ even in the First Century, in St. Clement's Epistle to the Corinthians. Tertullian supposed that St. Barnabas was the author of this Treatise, other ancient writers ascribed it to St. Clement, while Origen expresses the singular opinion, that "God only knows who wrote this Epistle," though in modern times, Luther held that the author of it was Apollos. It may be remarked, that this Epistle was included in the Peshito, or ancient Syriac Version of the 2nd Century, which is a strong proof of its early reception in the Church.§

\* Epist. ad Dard.—Tom. I. col. 1105. (Ed. Par. 1609.)

† Eccles. Hist. Lib. III. Cap. lli. p. 131.

‡ Ibid. Lib. VI. Cap. xx. p. 427.

§ Commentary on Hebrews, p. 60.

§ Davidson's Introd. to N. T. Vol. III. Pp. 163—259

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But these doubts apply most strongly to the Epistle of St. James and to the Second Epistle of St. Peter. Among all the numerous quotations from the New Testament to be found in the writings of the Primitive Fathers, Origen is the only one who refers to either of these Epistles. He quotes a single passage from St. James in his "Commentaries," with doubtful marks of approbation, while there are also a few references to it in his "Homilies," as preserved in the Latin Translation of Rufinus, though we cannot place much reliance on this part of the evidence, as it is well known that the Translator frequently took great liberties with the original, by introducing his own views with those of the author. And yet it is only through this suspicious channel that any reference to St. Peter's Second Epistle is to be found in the Works of Origen. But in his List of Books of the New Testament, the Epistle of St. James is entirely omitted, while the Second of St. Peter is referred to with great doubt. His words are these—"Peter, upon whom the Church of Christ was built, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail, left behind him an Epistle, of which we are certain. Let it be granted that he left another, but this is controverted."\* Eusebius himself says that St. James's Epistle was considered spurious, though he admits that it was publicly read in most Churches.† As to the Second of St. Peter, he says "he understood it was not in the New Testament," but he adds, "as it has appeared to many to be profitable, it has been studied with the other Scriptures."‡ If, then, the Canon of the New Testament depended only on historical evidence, these Epistles have not the slightest pretensions to a place in the Sa-

\* Origen, apud Euseb. Eccles. Hist. Lib. VI. Cap. xxv. p. 434.

† Euseb. Lib. II. Cap. xxiv. p. 124.

‡ Ibid. Lib. III. Cap. iii. p. 134.

cred Volume, and it is well known that the Epistle of St. James was rejected by Luther as "an Epistle of straw"—not so much on external evidence, as on the ground of its opposition to his own doctrine of Justification. There is, however, one important evidence in favor of St. James' Epistle, and that is, its insertion in the Syriac Version, though this evidence is wanting in favor of St. Peter's Second Epistle.\*

The Second and Third Epistles of St. John, with that of St. Jude, are scarcely noticed by primitive writers, and they are omitted in the Syriac Version. St. Jude's Epistle is omitted in Origen's List, though he quotes it in other parts of his Works.†

The Book of Revelation is also omitted in the Syriac Version, and it is well known that its Canonical authority was a frequent subject of controversy in ancient times. It appears that Caius, of Rome, maintained that it was a forgery of Cerinthus, the heretic, while Dionysius, of Alexandria, denied that it was written by St. John the Apostle. It is omitted in Six Lists of Canonical Books in the 4th Century, (as quoted before, p. 66) as well as in the Apostolical Canons and Apostolical Constitutions, and St. Jerome says that "the Greeks do not receive it among the Canonical Scriptures."‡ Even in the beginning of the 5th Century, it is never quoted nor referred to in all the voluminous Writings of St. Chrysostom. Among the Protestant Reformers, we find that Luther is vehement and decided in opposition to it. He says—"I regard this book as neither Apostolical nor Prophetical, and cer-

\* Grotius, the learned Protestant Commentator, supposed this Epistle to have been written by Simeon, Bishop of Jerusalem.

† The two former of these Epistles were ascribed by Grotius to another John the Presbyter, and the latter to another Jude, Bishop of Jerusalem, in the middle of the 2nd Century.

‡ Epist. ad Dard.—Tom. I. Col. 1105.

tainly I cannot see that it proceeded from the Holy Spirit. Many of the Fathers, too, rejected it long ago, and it is reason enough for me why I should not esteem it very highly, that Christ is neither taught nor acknowledged in it."\*

As to the disputed portions in the Gospels of St. Mark and of St. John, the learned Professor Davidson, after a full review of all the evidence, pronounces *against* their genuineness—that of St. Luke he thinks *probably* genuine,†—while the text in the First Epistle of St. John has only the support of a single Greek MS. of modern date.‡

It cannot be denied, then, that mere private judgment as distinguished from infallible Church authority, even when it is founded on historical evidence and Ecclesiastical testimony, must, on Protestant principles, be most unfavorable to the integrity of the Canon of the New Testament.

It is evident, however, that in the primitive ages of Christianity, the settlement of the Canon of Scripture was not regarded as a question of vital importance, as it is generally considered in modern times. There was no doctrine involved in the question. The doctrine of the Christian Church was derived from Apostolical Tradition, and not from the New Testament. The *truth* of our holy religion does not depend either on the *inspiration* or *genuineness* of these books. It was just as true *before* they were written as *after* they were written, though it may be admitted that, on Protestant principles, the *proof* of its truth is necessarily involved in these considerations. But these are two very different things, which

\* Preface to the Apocalypse, (Ed. 1522.)

† Introd. to N. T. Vol. I. Pp. 171, 222, 350.

‡ The Codex Montfortianus, now in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin.

must not be confounded together. If, indeed, the Christian revelation had been *originally* made in the New Testament, and in it *alone*, then we might conclude that we possessed the *whole* Christian revelation in the New Testament. The *written* Word of God would have then been co-extensive with the *revealed* Word of God. But as the revelation was made by oral teaching *in the first instance*, before any part of it was committed to writing, it follows that this conclusion is perfectly gratuitous, and that the *sufficiency of Scripture* cannot be proved from the mere *fact* of its Canonical authority. In early times, these books were not collected into a single Volume, as they are now, and the consequence was, that various books were received by some Christian Churches or individuals, and rejected by others, without any breach of faith or charity—it was quite an open question, before the decision of the Catholic Church, and on this, as well as on all other subjects of controversy, the Church pronounced her judgment simply by deciding authoritatively between the conflicting claims of various documents, not by *making* those Canonical, which had not been so before, but by *declaring*, with infallible certainty, the true meaning of the divine Tradition as to the real character of these books.

Here, then, we see the manifest absurdity of the language which is often held by Protestants on this subject. It is frequently said—"We do not receive the Bible, because the Church, the Pope, or the Councils have decided it to be Canonical Scripture, but because it is divinely inspired by the Holy Spirit." This is perfectly true, but the question is—How do we *know* it to be inspired, unless from the declaration of God Himself? and except each individual reader has received a direct revelation from heaven, it is impossible to prove the inspiration of

any part of the Bible in any other way than from the testimony of the Holy Spirit in the Church, and from the same testimony alone, we can ascertain the true foundation of faith, and the proper use of the written Word of God. Yet still many persons satisfy themselves with saying—"We have the Bible, and that is enough"—"it is the Word of God, and therefore it must be sufficient"—without reflecting that the *fact* itself is founded upon the decision of the Church, whose authority they reject, while the *inference* drawn from it is merely a human *opinion*, and derives no support from Scripture, unless it can be proved that the Bible contains the *whole* Word of God, and that their own *interpretation* of it is *infallibly true*.

It is evident, then, that in admitting the Inspiration of the New Testament, and especially of the Deutero-Canonical books, Protestants have fallen into two inconsistencies—1. In admitting, as a matter of *faith*, what *cannot* be proved from *Scripture*. 2. In admitting an important point of doctrine, the *proof* of which *implies* the admission of the Infallibility of the *Church*.

There is, indeed, an extraordinary confusion of ideas on this subject in the minds of many persons; and this confusion relates chiefly to three points, which may be regarded as the sources of all other errors relating to the respective claims of the Bible and of the Church. The first is the confusion between *the Bible and the Word of God*; the second is the confusion between *the Bible and the Interpretation of the Bible*; and the third is the confusion between *the Bible and the Translation of the Bible*.

Every Catholic fully holds, as an article of faith, that the Bible is the Word of God; but he also holds, on the same ground, that it is only a *part* of divine revelation.

and does not contain the *whole* "Word of God" delivered by the Apostles to the Church. And let us ask, where is the Bible ever called by the name of the "Word of God" in the Scripture itself? Let any one take a good Concordance, and he will find that there is not a single text in which it is exclusively applied to the *written* Word, and never, in any sense, to the New Testament, which is the principal subject of controversy. Thus it is said, (Rom. x. 17) that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by *the Word of God,*" that is, as the Apostle explains in the context, by the Gospel of peace *preached* by those who are *divinely sent* for this purpose. In like manner, in 1 Thess. ii. 13, the Apostle speaks of *the Gospel preached* by him, "not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, *the Word of God,*" delivered by human instrumentality, but with divine authority.

But further, the private *interpretation* of Scripture by fallible men, is not itself the Word of God, and yet this is all the authority Protestants can claim for the doctrines which they profess to derive from Scripture. When they appeal to *Scripture*, they simply appeal to *their own opinions* as to the *meaning* of Scripture, and therefore the contrast is not between the *Scripture* and the *Church*, but between *their own interpretation* of Scripture and the *Church's interpretation* of Scripture. Even if Scripture were the only Rule of Faith, it does not follow that every one is competent to judge of the true *meaning* of Scripture. The sufficiency of Scripture does not necessarily involve the right of private judgment. The Church of England holds the *former* principle, but is entirely silent as to the *latter*, except in condemnation of it, as applied in opposition to Ecclesiastical Traditions, according to the 34th Article. She lays down her own Rule of Faith, but she does not determine who is to

*apply* it, and hence there is a constant collision between the supposed rights of the *Church* and of her *individual* members, in the application of this rule. It is absurd, then, to draw a contrast between the Infallibility of the *Church* and the Infallibility of the *Bible*, as the term itself, properly speaking, is only applicable to *persons*, and not to *things*; it does not refer to the Bible, but to the *Author, or Interpreter*, of the Bible, and therefore such a mode of stating the question can lead to nothing but interminable confusion, while, under pretence of exalting the Word of God, the practical effect is to cherish a spirit of pride and self-sufficiency, by confounding the views of each individual reader with the true interpretation of Scripture, and thus investing every one's private fancy with the attribute of divine Infallibility. Let it be clearly understood, then, that there is no question whatever with respect to the supreme authority of Scripture in all matters of controversy. Both Catholics and Protestants fully admit that its decisions on all points are to be received with implicit submission. But the question is, what is the *true meaning* of Scripture? and who is the *authorised interpreter* of it? And surely it is evident that the *authority of the Church* no more interferes with the Supremacy of *Scripture*, than does the *right of private judgment*. The authority of the *Judge* does not interfere with the supremacy of the *Law*; no private individual is allowed to act upon his own interpretation of the *Law*, in opposition to the decision of the *Judge*, and yet it is not considered that the authority of *human Laws* is impaired by this restriction, though, by some strange process of reasoning, this inconsistency has been supposed to exist in the application of the same principle to the interpretation of the *divine Law*. It is a mere abuse of language, and only serves to keep the real question out of view, to repre-

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sent the Bible, as is frequently done, at once as the Rule of Faith, the Infallible Interpreter, and the Judge of Controversy. We have a curious instance of this confusion of ideas expressed in the Westminster Confession. After enumerating the Books of Scripture, it adds the statement—"All which are given by inspiration of God, to be the *rule of faith* and life." But who is to *interpret* this rule? "The *infallible rule of interpretation* of Scripture is the *Scripture itself*." And who is to *judge* of the true interpretation of Scripture and of the controversies of faith? "The *Supreme Judge*, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all Decrees of Councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but *the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture*."\* This explanation, however, leaves the real difficulty just where it was before, while there is an air of mystification thrown over the whole subject by the use of ambiguous language and pious phraseology.† For surely the Holy Spirit cannot *contradict Himself*, which must be the case, if every private Christian is at liberty to act upon these principles, and to adopt *his own conclusions as the infallible decision of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures*. Every one is thus made a Church to himself, and all divine authority in the Church is superseded by the exercise of private judgment in each individual. But, even on Protestant principles, this language is wholly inaccurate, as it confounds

\* Confession of Faith, chap. I. ii. ix. x.

† Milner, the Church Historian, adopts the same principle, when, after giving an account of the First General Council of Nice, he adds the remark—"It behoves every one, who is desirous of knowing simply the mind of God from His own Word, to DETERMINE FOR HIMSELF how far their interpretation of Scripture was true."—(Church History, Vol. II. p. 59. Ed. 1810.) How different the language of St. Athanasius—"The WORD OF THE LORD, delivered by the General Council of Nice, endureth for ever." (Epist. ad Afros.—Opp. Tom. I. p. 930. Ed. Par. 1627.)

the distinction between the offices of a *Rule*, a *Judge*, and an *Interpreter*; and it is obviously incorrect to speak of the Bible as being the only *Judge* of controversy, or the Bible being its own *interpreter*, both of which offices belong to the HOLY SPIRIT alone, these terms being only applicable to a *living authority* who is fully competent to resolve every *doubt* that may arise in the *application* of a *Rule*. It cannot, therefore, be supposed to be derogatory to the Inspiration of Scripture, when we speak of it as incapable of deciding the present controversies on account of its silence or obscurity, as the fact is certainly unquestionable, and is inseparably connected with the very nature of a book, when the author is no longer alive to explain his own meaning. It may be said, indeed, that the Divine Author of the Bible is ever living to hear the prayers of His people; but surely He has never promised to confer the gift of infallibility on each *individual* Christian, or to extend the spiritual illuminations of His grace to the *intellectual* operations of the mind by any special revelation; and if such supernatural assistance could be expected in answer to the prayers of *individuals*, how much more confidently may we expect the same blessings upon the representatives of the *whole Church*, assembled in solemn deliberation in the Name of Jesus Christ, and invoking the divine assistance of the Holy Spirit in united prayer for His heavenly guidance, in conformity with the promises of Our Blessed Redeemer. And thus it appears that, whether we regard the facts of history, the structure of the New Testament, the analogy of Providence, or the very nature of the case, it is perfectly clear that the Bible was never intended to be the *only* source of divine revelation to each *individual*, and nothing can be more preposterous than the idea that the only way of ascertaining the true doctrines of Christianity

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is by the application of private judgment to the interpretation of Scripture, which cannot fail to bring *contempt* upon the Word of God itself, and to result in the *disappointment* of the inquirer, while it only substitutes *opinion* for *faith*, *probability* for *certainty*, *imagination* for *reality*, and *reason* for *revelation*.

But further, we must distinguish between the *original text* of the Bible, and the English Protestant *Translation* of it. It is evidently impossible for any one to pronounce upon the true meaning of any passage of the Bible, without a critical knowledge of the *original* languages, as well as an absolute certainty of the perfect *integrity* of the received *text*, as it cannot be held that the Translators of the Bible were divinely inspired in the choice of each word and sentence in the English Version. Indeed, this is clearly implied in the multiplicity of English Versions which have been made since the Reformation, differing from each other in many important passages. And it cannot be denied that one of the most powerful means of advancing the doctrines of the Reformation was the circulation of corrupt Translations of the Bible, in which the Protestant *opinions* were artfully introduced into the *text*, and thus the people were deceived into the idea that these opinions were expressed in the *Bible itself*. Thus, in all the early English Versions, the word "Church" was carefully suppressed, and the word "Congregation" introduced in its place, and so every Scriptural argument in favor of the Church was met at once with the assertion that the Church is never mentioned in Scripture. In like manner, the word "images" was substituted for "idols," and the texts with this translation were conspicuously displayed in Churches, in proof of the popular charge of Idolatry against the Catholic Church. The "Traditions" of the *Apostles* were changed

into "ordinances," while the "Traditions" of the Jews were allowed to retain their former name. The Royal Supremacy was confirmed by the scriptural title of the king as "chief head," according to the translation of 1 Peter ii. 13. These and several others of the same kind have been altered in the present Version, but there are some new ones introduced, which did not occur in the first English Translations. Such is that of St. Paul's allusion to the miraculous gift of "tongues," which are called "*unknown* tongues," this word being repeated six times in 1 Cor. xiv. 2, 4, 13, 14, 19, 27—without the slightest authority in the original, and now frequently quoted against the language employed in the highest act of Catholic worship. Another instance is the "worshipping of angels," (Col. ii. 18) which in the Old Versions, was translated "holiness of angels," but is now considered a good text against the *Invocation* of Angels. Besides, it must be remembered that the present *English Version* was not made from the present *standard texts* of the Bible, that Version having been published in the year 1611, whereas the "received text" of the Greek Testament was not published till 1624\*, and that of the Hebrew Bible till 1661†. It is often stated, indeed, to be a peculiar advantage of the Protestant Bible, that it was translated from the original languages, whereas the Version generally used by Catholics was made from the Latin Vulgate, and therefore is frequently described as being only "the translation of a translation." But still, notwithstanding the professed attempts of Protestants to restore the text of the

\* 12mo. Lug. Bat. 1624. This is the celebrated Elzevir Edition; but the name of the Editor is unknown. The text is, however, materially altered in more recent critical Editions.

† 8vo. Amstel. 1661. The Editor was Leusden, and the Printer Athias. But Vanderhooght's improved Edition of 1705 is one of the most popular in the present day.

Bible to its original purity, the important question remains—What is the original text of the Bible? and on this question it is impossible ever to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion. Printed Editions differ from each other—there is the same difference among the most ancient MSS. Versions, and quotations—there is an immense number of Various Readings, and every heresy takes refuge under the convenient shelter of these Various Readings, or various interpretations, and thus contrives to evade the force of the strongest texts under pretence of interpolation, and then maintains that the rest are too few or too ambiguous to form the foundation of doctrine, while plausible pretexts are easily alleged for the denial of every objectionable doctrine by means of some new system of punctuation, on some figurative allusions, or some obscurity of language in the sacred writers.

It is not the design of the Church to interfere with the province of Biblical Criticism, and therefore she has never interposed her authority in fixing the *original* Text of the Sacred Scriptures. She has, however, decided in the 4th Session of the Council of Trent, that “the ancient Vulgate Edition, which has been approved in the Church by the long use of so many ages, be regarded as *authentic* in public Lectures, Disputations, Sermons, and Expositions”—not as superseding the study of the original languages, but as containing an *authorised Version* of the Bible to be used on all public occasions, as the English Protestant Version is “appointed to be read in Churches.” The Council further decided that an Edition of the Vulgate Bible should be printed as correctly as possible, and accordingly this task was commenced by Pope Pius IV. and finished by Pope Sixtus V. in the year 1590. The first Edition, however, contained several typographical errors, and, as the

Pope was not satisfied with this impression, he ordered it to be again published in a revised and corrected form.\* He did not live, however, to see this work completed, but it was finally accomplished by Pope Clement VIII. in 1592, of which another Edition was published with some further alterations in 1593, and this is the standard Edition of the Latin Vulgate at the present day, the title of which is—"Biblia Sacra Vulgatæ Editionis, Sixti V. Pontificis Maximi, jussu recognita, et Clementis VIII. auctoritate edita." Protestants have endeavored to found upon this difference an argument against the Papal Infallibility, but the Infallibility of the Church was never supposed to extend to the Infallibility of the Vulgate, and much less to the Infallibility of the Printers who were engaged in the publication of this Edition. This attack was commenced by Thomas James, who published his "Bellum Papale" in the year 1600, in which he enumerated about 2000 variations between the Sixtine and Clementine Editions. The same argument is taken up by Dr. Gray (p. 84), Dr. Cramp (p. 33), and Mr. Hunter (p. 40), the latter of whom remarks that "Pope Sixtus V. found this Vulgate, approved by an Infallible Council, so incorrect that he published a new Edition." Mr. Hunter has strangely confounded the *Vulgate itself* with the *various Editions* of it, and hence he imagines that the Pope acted *in opposition* to the Council of Trent in publishing a new Edition of it. It is necessary, therefore, to inform him that it was the *Council itself* which ordered this new Edition, (in the same Decree which declared the Vulgate to be the authentic Version), in order to produce a uniform text of the Bible, and this circumstance is referred to in the very

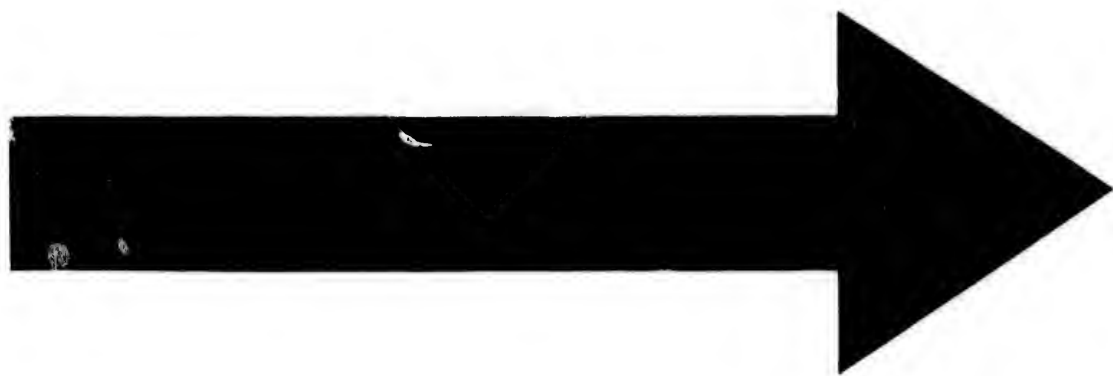
\* This is the cause assigned in the "Præfatio ad Lectorem," which is prefixed to the present Editions of the Vulgate, and which was written by the famous Bellarmine. Vide Le Long, Pars II. vol. III. p. 216.

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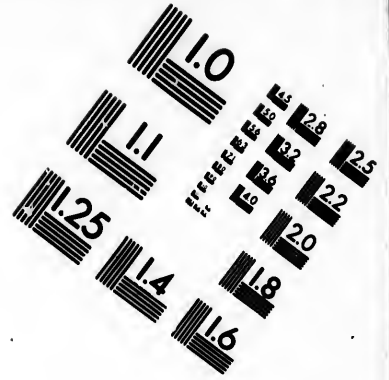
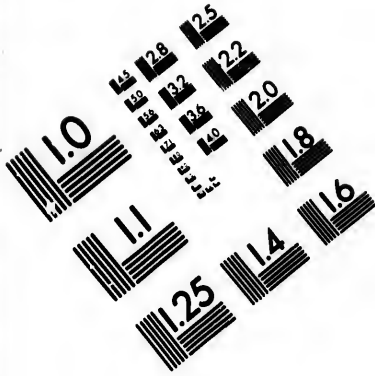
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title-page of the Book.† But it is objected that both these Editions, which exhibit so many variations from each other, are equally sanctioned by Papal authority. This objection, however, is founded upon a mistake as to the design of this new Edition of the Vulgate. It never was the professed object of the Council, or the Pope, to produce a perfectly accurate Version of the Bible, or to settle the *text* of Scripture by *infallible* authority. The authority claimed for the Vulgate improved Edition of it, was never intended to affirm the idea of its Inspiration, nor was the Infallibility of the Pope ever supposed to extend to a question of fact, which could only be determined by a critical examination of ancient MSS. The design was simply to secure uniformity by the publication of a correct standard text, sanctioned by the approbation of the highest authority in the Church, and not merely of particular Divines, or private Printers, as had formerly been the case. That object was secured by the Edition of Sixtus or of Clement, the only design of the Decree prefixed to these Editions being to prohibit the public use of any other Editions, but by no means depriving themselves or their successors of the liberty of submitting these Editions to a future revision, so that it is fully competent for the present Pope, without any prejudice to his predecessors, to order a new revision of the Vulgate, if it should be thought necessary. Had these Popes declared that *each* of their Editions contained the *only genuine texts* of the Vulgate, then there would have been a contradiction between them, but there was not the slightest pretension to any exercise of *infallibility* in the decision of this question. Dr. Gray gives an account of the Bull of Pope Sixtus V.

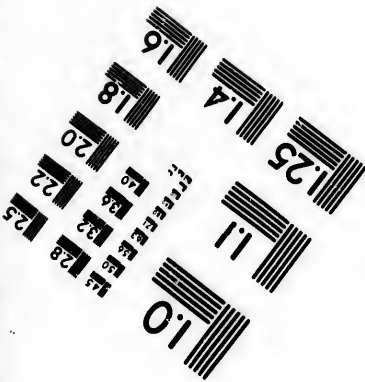
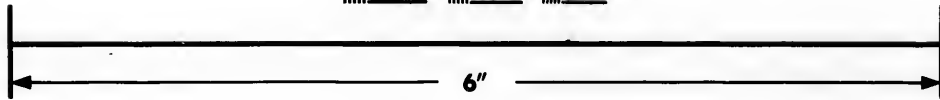
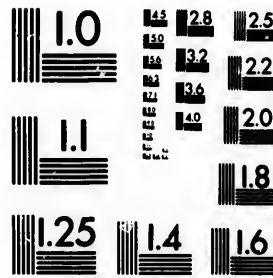
† "Biblia Sacra Vulgatæ Editionis, ad Conclii Tridentini præscriptum emendata, et a Sixto V. P. M. recognita et approbata. Le Long, Bibliotheca Sacra, Pars II. vol. iii. p. 239. (Ed. Italæ, 1783.)"







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which, however, is purely fictitious. I have attentively read the whole of that document, and I am unable to discover any foundation for his statement. It certainly prohibited any alteration in the text by private authority, but it made an express exception, with reference to any new Edition, in favor of the Apostolic See. The Council of Trent had ordered a similar revision of the Roman Missal and Breviary, and this arrangement was afterwards carried into effect by three different Popes, St. Pius V. Clement VIII. and Urban VIII. without the slightest disparagement to the labors of each other; and on the same principle it is well known that various Editions of the English Bible and Book of Common Prayer, widely different from each other, have been published and authorised from time to time in the Church of England, and each of them superseding the former Editions.

I must now say a few words on a subject which has been greatly misunderstood—I mean, the discipline of the Church as to the reading of the Scriptures by the Laity in the Vulgar tongue. Dr. Cramp says (p. 43) that the Catholic Church is “anxious to prevent her children from becoming familiar with Scripture, lest they should learn to undervalue the authority of the Church.” He quotes the 4th Rule of the “Congregation of the Index,” together with some other documents, in proof of this position, which is indeed the common misrepresentation of the Catholic practice on this point. As usual, he confounds *Scripture* with the *indiscriminate reading of Scripture*, and states the contrast to be that of “Tradition *versus* Scripture,” whereas it is really between *divine authority* and *human interpretations* of Scripture. Now the truth is, that the Church has never formally prohibited the study of the Scriptures among any of her children, but, on the contrary, has strongly encouraged it,

when it is performed with the proper dispositions of humility and submission to divine authority, though she does not regard it as essentially necessary for Christian faith and piety. The practice was highly recommended by several of the ancient Fathers, and we do not find any authoritative interference on the subject on the part of the Church till the 13th Century, when the Provincial Council of Tholouse, held in the year 1229, published a Decree on this subject, in opposition to the wild heresies and revolutionary doctrines of the Albigenes and other sects, which were founded on the corrupt interpretation of Scripture. No General Council, however, has ever thought it necessary to legislate on this point, and it is left entirely with the wisdom of the Church to make such regulations as may seem proper for preserving the faithful from the dangers to which they are exposed by the abuse of this sacred privilege. Even the Rule of the Index, though sanctioned by the Pope, is not always strictly enforced, and in these countries it is well understood that there is no restriction whatever on the perusal of the English Version which is in general circulation among the Catholics of the British Empire. If, indeed, the Scriptures are read with the idea that they contain the *whole* Word of God, or that every reader is qualified to *interpret* them, without submitting his opinion to the Church, then we are fully justified in believing that the practice may be attended with danger, not as arising from any defect in the Sacred Scriptures, but from the temerity of human pride. Thus the Catholic Church, like a prudent mother, neither absolutely *prohibits* nor absolutely *enforces* the practice of the private study of Scripture among her members, as she is convinced that a wise discretion is necessary to be exercised according to different circumstances, though in all ordinary

cases, she permits and recommends it to her obedient children\*. It should be observed, then, that there is no formal restriction imposed by the Church, as this regulation is merely a bye-law, intended to counteract the circulation of corrupt Translations and dangerous perversions of the Scriptures; and further, that this restriction was never intended to apply to the study of the *original texts*, or to *ancient versions*, of the Bible, but only to preserve the ignorant and obstinate from an improper use of that blessed Book. It is necessary, therefore, that the Translation used should have been made by a Catholic author, and that it should have received the sanction of the Ecclesiastical authorities. It is well known that the English Version in general use among Catholics is that commonly called the Douay Bible, as the Translation of the Old Testament was first published in the English College of Douay†, though the New Testament had been previously issued from the English College of Rheims‡, both of which, however, have since undergone extensive alterations. These Editions are usually accompanied with Notes, or Expositions of difficult passages, which, however, are not to be considered as the authoritative interpretation of the Church. The approbation given to them is only understood to imply

\* Thus Pope Pius VI. writes to Archbishop Martini, with reference to his Italian Translation of the Bible—"You judge exceedingly well, that THE FAITHFUL SHOULD BE EXCITED TO THE READING OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, for these are the most abundant sources, which OUGHT TO BE LEFT OPEN TO EVERY ONE, to draw from them purity of morals and of doctrine, to eradicate the errors which are so widely disseminated in these corrupt times. This you have seasonably effected, as you declare, by publishing the Sacred Writings IN THE LANGUAGE OF YOUR COUNTRY, suitable to every one's capacity—especially where you show and set forth, that you have added Explanatory Notes, which, being extracted from the Holy Fathers, preclude every possible danger."

† 2 Vols. 4to. Douay, 1609—10. The Notes were written by Dr. Thomas Worthington.

‡ 4to. Rhemes, 1582. Notes by Dr. Richard Bristow. Both translations were chiefly made by Dr. Gregory Martini. (Dodd's [Eccles. Hist. Vol. II. p. 121. Fol. Bruss. 1739.]

that they contain *nothing* contrary to the doctrine of the Catholic Church, as to faith and morals. It is a common opinion, but it is altogether erroneous, that the Scriptures were first translated into the vernacular languages of modern Europe by the Protestant Reformers. Thus we find that a Catholic German Translation of the Bible was published in the very infancy of printing, the first Editions of which are without date, subsequently printed at Augsburg in 1477, before Luther was born, and frequently reprinted in Germany before the commencement of the Reformation. The first Catholic French Bible was printed at Paris in 1488, while an Italian Version was printed (probably at Venice) in 1471, a Spanish Version at Valencia in 1478\*, and a Dutch Bible at Delft in 1477†, and in all these, and various other European languages, Catholic Versions have since been frequently published with the full approbation of the highest Ecclesiastical authorities.

But it is often said that the Church has *no right* to impose any conditions or restrictions whatever on the indiscriminate circulation of the Bible "without note or comment." Now, in answer to this objection, we affirm that there is *no divine precept* imposing on the laity the obligation of reading the Scriptures, and consequently that the Church is at perfect *liberty* to lay down her own regulations on this subject. It is usually said, indeed, that our blessed Saviour *commands* us to "search the Scriptures," and this is regarded as a positive proof of the point. But from the remarks on this text made before (pp. 41-44), it is evident that no authority can be derived from it. Besides, it is well known that there is an ambiguity in the grammatical construction of the pas-

\* Dixon's Introduction, Vol. I. pp. 134-141. (Am. Ed.)

† Dibdin's Bibliotheca Spenceriana, Vol. I. p. 68.

sage, and it is impossible to ascertain whether the words are to be understood in the *indicative* or *imperative* mood. Many Protestant critics prefer the former view, and suppose that the true meaning is, "Ye search the Scriptures." If so, it is plain that no argument whatever can be founded on this passage. But if it be a *command*, we must recollect that it was addressed to the Jews—not to the common people, but to the learned men of the nation, and there is not the slightest reason to believe that it was intended as a *general* direction to all Christians in future times. Indeed, it might almost as well be said that St. Paul's direction to Timothy, "drink no longer water," was of universal obligation, merely because there is no limitation expressed in the passage. It is not, however, our object by any means to discourage this pious practice, but only to vindicate the discipline of the Catholic Church from the charge of its *opposition to Scripture*, on the ground of its opposition to the *Protestant Translation*. We are well aware that the Church is commonly represented in the most virulent terms as directly hostile to the Bible, and afraid of allowing it free circulation, because she is opposed to Protestant views and *Protestant interpretations* of the Bible, which are thus confidently assumed to be identical with the doctrines of the *Bible itself*. But the Catholic Church entertains too much respect for the blessed Book of God, and too tender a regard for the spiritual welfare of her children, to allow their faith to be exposed to all the dangers of private judgment in the interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures, and therefore she imposes a salutary restraint upon "the liberty of erring," by confining their views of Scriptural interpretation within the limits prescribed by her divine wisdom, and regulating them "according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers." It is, indeed, our ardent desire to have the Sacred Scriptures placed

in the hands, and cherished in the hearts, of all our Catholic families and individuals; and we are fully persuaded that, if used with the right dispositions of humility and prayer, the study of them would be most conducive to their advancement in piety, and their attachment to the faith of the Catholic Church. But we do not regard it as a matter of indispensable importance, as the teaching of the Church is fully sufficient for all practical purposes, and comparatively few are capable of deriving unmixed benefit from any other source of instruction than that which our Saviour has furnished for the guidance of Christians. And yet the Protestant, who denies the authority of any other Rule of Faith but the Bible, must consistently deny that any true grounds of faith can be possessed by those who are *unable to read* or to understand the Bible, as there can be no real *faith*, according to their principles, in believing those doctrines which they *cannot prove* to be founded on the Bible—and thus the uneducated Protestant must take his religion entirely on the testimony of others, and consequently he has nothing but human authority for the foundation of his faith, while the simple, illiterate Catholic, who rests satisfied with the divine authority of the Church, can make an act of faith in all her doctrines, as firmly and devoutly as those who are possessed of the highest intellectual abilities and mental cultivation.

And what an immense amount of *learning* is necessary for every one to have, on Protestant principle, before he can make a simple *act of faith*? He must take nothing on trust from others, if he acts consistently with these principles. He must satisfy himself by personal research of the genuineness, authenticity, integrity, inspiration, and canonical authority of every part of the Bible—he must be profoundly learned in ancient languages in order to be sure that he has a correct translation—he must be



possessed of the highest intellectual and religious qualifications, in order to decide on the right interpretation of Scripture on every point of doctrine and practice; but all these are not sufficient—he must be *infallible*, in order to be *certain* of his faith. And yet this is often described as the perfection of Christian simplicity, to adopt the Protestant Rule of Faith, by making the profession—“*I believe all that is in the Bible*”—without considering all the processes of human reason involved in this profession, or that it may be conscientiously made by those who reject every doctrine of Christianity. On the other hand, when a Catholic says—“*I believe what the Church believes*”—he not only *includes* the *former* profession, but also *every positive doctrine* of Christianity, not as expressed in the ambiguous language of Protestantism, but in the full and comprehensive definition of the Catholic Church. The one is fixed and definite, while the other is vague and uncertain. Thus, suppose a Protestant were convinced that God has given us an infallible guide in religion, he has no further difficulty on the subject. There is only *one Church* in the world which answers to this description, and therefore his duty is to join this Church at once. But suppose a Catholic were convinced of the truth of Protestantism, his difficulties are only commencing—he he is perplexed and distracted by the conflicting claims of some hundreds of Protestant sects, all professing to follow the Bible as their only Rule of Faith—he is perfectly bewildered in the choice of a religion, and though he may, through accidental circumstances, connect himself with some one of them, yet, if he acts consistently with the principle, he must hold them all equally right in their views, or renounce the very profession of Christianity.

But if the Scriptures are the only Rule of Faith, we must be sure, not only that we have all that are *now* in

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existence, but all that were *ever* written by divine inspiration. But how is it possible to arrive at any certainty on this point, even with regard to the New Testament? Were *all* the writings of the Apostles, on religious subjects, *divinely inspired*? Can it be supposed that they never wrote *any* Works but those which are still *preserved*? What is become of the lost Epistles of St. Paul to the Corinthians and to the Laodiceans, and of St. John's Epistle to the Churches, to which they themselves refer? (See 1 Cor. v. 9. Col. iv. 16. 3 John 9.) And how do we know that even the controverted doctrines of the Church are not expressly taught in these and other Works, which are now no longer in existence? And where are we now to find the passages of the Old Testament quoted by inspired Apostles from the Prophets and other Scriptures\*, as well as by early Christian writers from David†, Jeremiah‡, and Ezra§?

\* See Matt. ii. 23. Eph. v. 14. James iv. 5. Jude 14.

† "The Lord reigned from the wood" of the Cross. (Psalm xvi. 10.) This passage is quoted by Justin Martyr (Dial. cum Tryph. p. 179. Ed. Ben.) with the remark that the latter part of it had been erased from the text by the Jews. It is also cited by St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, St. Leo, St. Gregory the Great, and others. There is a curious allusion to it in the ancient Hymn of the Church—"Vexilla Regis"—in the Roman Breviary—

"Impleta sunt, quæ concludit  
David fideli carmine,  
Dicendo nationibus,  
REGNAVIT A LIGNO DEUS."

‡ "And the Lord God of Israel remembered His dead, which slept in the land of the grave, and descended unto them to preach unto them His salvation." These words are also produced by Justin Martyr (ut supra) with the same remark. They are quoted shortly afterwards by St. Irenæus, in two passages, (Contra Hæc. Lib. III. cap. xx. p. 214. Ed. Ben. and Lib. IV. cap. xxii. p. 259.) in the former of which he ascribes them to Isalah, and in the latter to Jeremiah; also in three other passages anonymously (pp. 270, 273, 330.) See Pearson on the Creed, p. 212. (Ed. 1669.)

§ "And Ezra said unto the people, This Passover is our Saviour and our Refuge, and if you can feel a firm persuasion that we are about to humble and degrade Him in this sign, and afterwards should place our sure trust and hope in Him, then this place shall never be made desolate, saith the Lord of Hosts: but if you do not believe in Him, nor listen to that which He shall announce, ye shall be a derision to all nations." This extraordinary passage is also quoted by Justin Martyr, (ut supra, p. 178) and for the same purpose. It is likewise referred to by Lactantius, (Instit. Divin. Lib. IV. cap. 18. p. 372. Ed. 1684.) See Archbishop Magee's Note on this passage, (Atonement and Sacrifice, Vol. I. p. 299. 5th Ed.)

These are some of the questions which must be satisfactorily answered by Protestants, before they can venture to assert, even on their own principles, that they have now the *whole* written Word of God in the present collection\*; it is another question, whether they have the true *interpretation* of that Word, and a still further question, of the greatest importance, whether the whole *revealed* Word is contained in the *written* Word, and thus it appears, from an attentive consideration of the subject, that there is not the slightest foundation for the usual objection, that the Catholic doctrine is founded upon the traditions of men instead of the Word of God†, and that this objection can only be sustained by denying the divine authority of the unwritten doctrines of the Apostles, and making the opinion of each individual the only standard of appeal from the decision of the Church.

Dr. Cramp advances a series of objections to the Catholic Rule of Faith, which he arranges under seven heads of argument. They are certainly not remarkable for perspicuity, as to the *order* in which they are placed, or the *proofs* by which they are supported, and the substance of them may be expressed in the following summary. 1. "The first is, its opposition to Scripture" (p. 15.) The proof is the private interpretation of certain texts of Scripture, which have been already considered

\* Professor Stuart, the learned American Baptist Divine, candidly remarks—"I do not pretend that there is nothing mysterious in the dispensations of Providence, which have permitted some of the sacred books to perish, and others to have been in some slight respects marred, in the course of transcription. I am well aware that a perpetual miracle in order to preserve the Scriptures has not unfrequently been assumed, and zealously maintained. But facts contradict this. It is of no use to close our eyes against these. We shall neither convince ourselves nor any one else, by such a process. But if I reject THE SCRIPTURES as a revelation from God ON THIS ACCOUNT, I must reject THE CHURCH as a divine Institution on the like account." (Old Testament Canon, p. 177. Davidson's Ed.)

† It may be remarked, that the Anglean Bishop Montague fully admits that "TRADITIONS from the Apostles have EQUAL authority with their WRITINGS, and no Protestant in his senses will deny that the Apostles SPOKE much more than is WRITTEN." (Gagger gagged, p. 41.)

(pp. 40-50.) 2. The second is the *novelty* of this rule, (p. 28.) The proof is the same as the last—"lacking the authority of Scripture, it must of necessity be novel,"—and of course it admits of the same answer. 3. "The theory now under discussion is altogether *unsatisfactory* in its operation" (p. 31.) I ask, *unsatisfactory to whom?* The answer must be, *to Protestants*. What is this but saying that they are not satisfied with the rule, because they are not Catholics? The very *vagueness* of the objection precludes any further inquiry into its meaning. 4. "It involves a state of intellectual degradation, to which no man ought to submit" (p. 35.) Certainly it requires the grace of humility to *submit reason to faith*, and without this submission no one can be a Christian. This objection, then, seems to admit that the *principle* of Protestantism is virtually the same with that of Infidelity, which cavils at revelation on account of its opposition to the pride of human nature. 5. "The Scripture-and-Tradition theory is *impracticable*" (p. 37.) What does this mean? It is implied that every individual must examine the Fathers and Councils before he can be sure that he has found the true Church. No such thing—the object of faith is *divine revelation*, and not the *books* in which it has come down to us. It is quite possible to *believe in God*, without requiring any *additional evidence* in proof of the truth of His Word. 6. The next objection is the failure of the Catholic rule. "It has been on its trial for ages, and has signally failed" (p. 41.) The proof is the alleged want of unity among the Popes and Doctors of the Church. This is not true, as will be shown in another place. 7. The last is the tendency of the Catholic rule "to make the Word of God of none effect" (p. 42.) The learned Divine evidently confounds the *doctrines of the Apostles* with the *Traditions of the*

• *Jews* (Mark vii. 8-13), because they are both described under the same name, to which we have already adverted, (p. 22.) On the whole, then, we may safely say that these objections carry their own refutation with them, and are scarcely entitled to any serious consideration.

I now proceed to consider the objections that are made by my opponents to my account of the testimony of the Fathers, on the authority of Tradition and the Rule of Faith.

Dr. Gray thinks it sufficient to reply (p. 71) that "the early Christian writers applied the terms "Rule of Faith" to any brief summary of the leading articles of Christianity." This is perfectly true, and I need scarcely say that I found no argument whatever on the technical use of this phrase, as it is not the *name*, but the *thing*, which is of essential importance. It was generally used by the ancient Christians to signify the Apostolical Tradition contained in the *Creed*, and in the same sense it is frequently used by Laud, Bramhall, Taylor, and other Divines of the Protestant Church of England in the 17th Century. Indeed the first instance we have of the adoption of this term in its modern sense in any public document, as far as I am aware, occurs in the Articles of the Protestant Church of Ireland, drawn up by Ussher, and published in 1615. The first article is expressed in these words—"The ground of our religion, and the *Rule of Faith* and all saving truth, is the Word of God *contained in the Holy Scripture.*" It was afterwards adopted in the Westminster Confession (which so closely followed the Irish Articles on other points of doctrine) but was not generally employed in its present sense till the time of Tillotson and William III\*. Of course I use it in these

\* Tracts for the Times, No. XC. p. 8.

pages in the same sense—as a convenient term for expressing *the foundation of all religious doctrine*.

It is stated by Dr. Gray (p. 71), and by Mr. Hunter (p. 26), that I have misrepresented the views of the Fathers, in their mode of arguing with the heretics of their times. I referred particularly to St. Irenæus and to Tertullian, who lived in the latter part of the 2nd Century; but it appears that the truth of this appeal has been disputed and denied, and certain passages from their Writings, ingeniously detached from their context, have been produced in support of the opposite conclusion. Mr. Hunter says that these ancient Christian writers appealed to Scripture alone, while their opponents appealed also to Tradition and to Apocryphal Books, in support of their views, from which he draws the inference, that it is “clear beyond doubt that the position of the *heretics* of their day was precisely that which *Rome* occupies in our time.” I must therefore briefly refer to the *principles* of the controversy between the Catholics and the heretics of those early times.

The most formidable enemies of the Church at this time were the Gnostics and the Marcionites, the former of whom were chiefly opposed by St. Irenæus, and the latter by Tertullian. The Gnostics rejected the essential principles of the Catholic Church—its unity of doctrine founded on the teaching of the Apostles, through the divine assistance of the Holy Ghost. While Catholics appealed to *the Church* (that is, to the doctrine of the Apostles), the Gnostics appealed to *the Scriptures* (that is, to their own private interpretation of them), for they maintained, even at this early period, that the Church herself had been changed and *corrupted*, and that she required to be *reformed* and purified from these errors and additions. And further, they opposed the Apostoli-

cal Traditions of the Universal Church, by maintaining that there were certain *secret doctrines* imparted by Christ or His Apostles, to a few chosen Disciples, which had been communicated to *themselves alone*—this was what they meant by *Tradition*, and they maintained that it was impossible to understand the Scriptures without a knowledge of *these doctrines*\*. They also rejected some of the Books of the *New Testament*, while others were corrupted and mutilated, and several fictitious or *Apocryphal* Gospels were adopted by them, which Mr. Hunter confounds with the *Deutero-Canonical* Books of the *Old Testament*. It is evident, then, that both Catholics and heretics maintained that the Rule of Faith consisted of Scripture and Tradition—so far they agreed in *words*, but they differed as to the *nature* of Tradition—by which the former understood *the doctrines of the Church*, received from the Apostles, while the latter applied it to *their own secret doctrines*, which they pretended to have derived from the same source—and thus the one consisted of *true*, and the other of *false*, Tradition. Had my opponents been aware of this distinction, they would never have ventured to quote the passage to which they refer, from St. Irenæus†—as if it were contrary to the Catholic doctrine of Tradition. A few lines after this passage, St. Irenæus says of the Gnostic heretics—“When we appeal to *that Tradition which is from the Apostles, which is preserved in the Church* by the succession of Presbyters, they *oppose Tradition*, saying that they themselves, being wiser, not only than the Presbyters, but even than the Apostles, have discovered the sincere truth. . . . The consequence is, that *they neither agree with Scripture, nor with Tradition.*”‡ And again, he says, in the following chap-

\* Dollinger's History of the Church (Cox's Translation) Vol. I. Pp. 147-150.

† S. Iren. contra Hæc. Lib. III. cap. II. 1. p. 174. (Ed. Ben.)

‡ S. Iren. Lib. III. cap. II. 2. p. 175.

ter—"Those who wish to see the truth may find *the Tradition of the Apostles manifested in the whole Church* throughout the world, and we are able to count up those who were appointed by the Apostles to be Bishops in the Churches, and their successors to our day, none of whom either taught or knew any of these dreams. For if the Apostles had known *any hidden mysteries*, which they had taught *separately and secretly* to the perfect, they would have committed them to those more especially, to whom they committed the Churches themselves."\*

But Mr. Hunter refers to some statements of St. Irenæus relative to the *perfection* of Scripture. It appears from a Fragment (first published in the Benedictine Edition) that the Saint mystically explains Samson's two Pillars as types of the two Testaments†, or the Jewish and Christian *Covenants*, which Mr. Hunter has strangely mistaken for the *Old and New Testaments*, or the two parts of *the Bible*. He adds that St. Irenæus "asserts the verbal inspiration of the New Testament" &c. Now he makes no allusion whatever to this subject, nor was this latter term ever applied to any books of Scripture till the following Century. Equally incorrect is his statement of the views of St. Irenæus as to the final standard of appeal on matters of controversy. He says, further, that St. Irenæus is only *supposing a case*, which did not exist, with regard to the authority of Tradition in the absence of Scripture. But in the words immediately following his own quotation, he states it to be *a fact*, that "many barbarous nations, who believe in Christ, diligently preserve the doctrine of salvation, written in their hearts by the Spirit, and the old *Tradition, without paper or ink.*"‡

\* Ibid. cap. iii. 1.

† Fragmenta, p. 346. (Fol. Par. 1710.)

‡ Ibid. cap. iv. 2. p. 178.



Dr. Gray (p. 74) quotes a passage from St. Irenæus, which he supposes to mean that the Apostles delivered to us "the Scriptures, to be the foundation and pillar of our faith."\* Now the object of St. Irenæus is not to prove the *sufficiency* of Scripture, but to prove the *harmony* between Scripture and Tradition, as having *both* been delivered by the *same* persons. I must remark, however, that Dr. Gray has evidently mistaken the construction of the sentence, as these words, from their grammatical connexion, cannot refer to the *Scriptures*, but to the *Gospel preached* by the Apostles—(the word "fundamentum" being in apposition with "Evangelium," and not with "Scripturis")—and thus it appears that the passage really relates, not to the *Scriptures*, but to the *Apostolical Traditions* of the Church. Besides, the expression is evidently an allusion to 1 Tim. iii. 15, where it is applied by the Apostle to "*the Church of the living God.*"

He quotes another passage (p. 75) on the refutation of heresy from the Scriptures†, but he omits the whole of the preceding sentence, in which the Saint refers to *other* proofs of the true doctrine of the Incarnation, which forms the subject of his disputation. He omits, too, the word "also" at the beginning of his quotation, from which it appears that the Scriptures are only referred to as *one* of several *other* proofs, and the *last* mentioned by the Saint.

But Dr. Gray says (p. 75) that St. Irenæus "*identifies* the Apostolical Traditions with the doctrines of Scripture." Now we find that he expressly *distinguishes* between them, when he says that heretics "*agree neither with Scripture, nor with Tradition*" ‡—and again, in concluding his argument from the latter, he returns to the

\* Ibid. cap. i. 1. p. 173.

† Ibid. Lib. V. cap. xiv. 4. p. 311.

‡ Ibid. p. 175.

former—"Such being the evidence of the *Tradition* of the Apostles in the Church and continuing among us, let us return to the proof from the *Scriptures*."\*

Moreover, we find that St. Irenæus constantly maintains that the true meaning both of Scripture and Tradition is only to be found *in the Church*, for he says—"it is not from others that the truth is to be sought, which may be readily learned *from the Church*, since the Apostles have most abundantly poured the whole truth into her as into a rich depository, so that whosoever will may take of her the water of life. For she is the entrance of life, and all others are thieves and robbers."† And again—"God hath placed in His Church, Apostles, Prophets and Doctors, and the whole operation of the Spirit, of which they do not partake who do not run to the Church, but by their own evil opinions and actions, they deprive themselves of life. For *where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God*, and where the Spirit is, there is the Church and all grace; for the Spirit is truth."‡ This holy Father insists upon the *different* opinions of *heretics* as a certain proof of *error*, and the *unity* of doctrine in the *Church* as a certain proof of *truth*. He says that they do not agree among themselves—"so *different are their opinions drawn from the same Scriptures*. When, therefore, they agree among themselves on what they draw from the Scriptures, it will be time for us to refute them. In the mean time, thinking erroneously, and not agreeing in the meaning of the same words, they convict themselves; but we, following one true and only God for our Master, and making His words the rule of truth, *always speak alike of the same things*."§ It appears very

\* Ibid. Lib. III. cap. v. 1. p. 179.

† Ibid. cap. iv. 1. p. 178.

‡ Ibid. cap. xxiv. 1. p. 223.

§ Ibid. Lib. IV. cap. xxxv. 4. p. 277.

clear that this is precisely the tone of argument employed by Catholics in the present day.\*

Mr. Hunter (p. 26) appeals also to Tertullian, and quotes his expression—"I adore the fulness of Scripture"—in proof of this Author's view of the sufficiency of Scripture. But these words have no reference to this subject. They occur in his Treatise against Hermogenest, who denied that the world was created out of nothing. In opposition to this opinion, Tertullian quotes the 1st verse of the Book of Genesis, and then adds this reflection with regard to the Scriptures, as fully proving this *particular point* of doctrine, but he makes no *general* application of the principle to all *other* subjects of religion, while, (as stated before, p. 36) he asserts the necessity of *unwritten Traditions* in another part of his Works.

And it may be remarked that every expression of the Fathers, in commendation of the Holy Scriptures, is in perfect accordance with the *Catholic* doctrine, which teaches that Scripture is *a* divine rule of faith, but not the *only* rule, while every expression of the Fathers, in commendation of Tradition, is in direct opposition to the *Protestant* doctrine, which teaches that Scripture is the *only* rule of faith and practice.

Let us, then, examine the mode of reasoning employed by Tertullian on this subject. The whole design of his argument is to show that heretics have no right to appeal to the Scriptures at all, because it is only from the sanction of the Church that Scripture derives its authority,

\* Dr. Gray (p. 74) refers to the testimony of Erasmus, the first Editor of St. Irenæus, in the Preface to that Edition printed at Basil in 1526. In reply, I may here quote the remark of Fovardentius, in his Edition printed at Paris in 1575. "Apertissimum est Erasmus Roterod. toto cælo aberrasse, quum scribit ipsum Irenæum solis scripturarum præsidis adversus hæreticorum catervam pugnasse." (Annot. in S. Iren. Lib. III. cap. ii.)

† Tertull. Opp. Tom. II. p. 111. (Ed. Somler.)

and therefore, *if they reject that authority*, they cannot consistently appeal to the authority of *Scripture*, while, *if they admit that authority*, they must also submit to the teaching of the Church on *all other* points of doctrine. With these views, he declares that "*We must not therefore appeal to the Scriptures*, nor must we try the issue on points on which the victory is either none, or doubtful. For though the debate on the Scriptures should so turn out so as to place each party on an equal footing, the order of things would require that *this* question should be first proposed, which is now the only one to be discussed—to *whom does the faith belong? whose are the Scriptures?* by whom, through whom, when, and to whom, was that rule delivered, by which men become Christians? For wheresoever both the true Christian rule and faith shall be proved to be, there will be the true Scriptures, the true interpretation, and all the true Christian Traditions."\* Having thus asserted the principle, that the Scriptures are the exclusive property of the Catholic Church, he begins with the foundation of the Church, and traces its progress in the Churches planted by the Apostles, as the only depositories of divine truth. He then proceeds to notice the objection, that these Churches had *erred*, which he answers with the doctrine of the *infallibility* of the Church, as secured by the promise of Christ, and the office of the Holy Ghost†, and after this he issues his famous challenge to heretics. "*Let them produce the origin of their Churches; let them exhibit the order of their Bishops, and show, by their succession from the beginning, that their first Bishop had one of the Apostles, or Apostolical men, in communion with the Apostles, as the founder of their*

\* De Preser. Hæret. Cap. xix. Opp. Tom. 1. p. 22.

† Ibid. Cap. xxviii. p. 33.

Church."\* Once more, he says—"If the truth, then, be adjudged to us who *embrace the rule which the Church received from the Apostles*, the Apostles from Christ, and Christ from God, it is plain that *heretics cannot be allowed to appeal to the Scriptures*, in which we prove that they have no concern. They are not Christians, and therefore we may say to them, *who are you? when and whence did you come? what right have you to my estate? the possession is mine, has been mine of old, mine first, the title-deeds are in my hands, derived from those whose property it was—I am the heir of the Apostles.*"†

Now, if this argument was considered valid in the 2nd Century, how much more so in the 19th Century, in favor of the claims of the Catholic Church! In all ordinary cases, we fully admit the importance of *prescriptive rights* founded on immemorial usage and constant possession, even though there may be some difficulty in establishing the claims by an appeal to legal documents. If a family has for several Centuries been in undisputed possession of a certain title and the estates belonging to it, is not this very circumstance a strong *presumptive proof* of the *validity* of the title? And will it not require an overwhelming amount of evidence in any *intruder* to establish his claim by *dispossessing* the former occupant? And such is precisely the case; with reference to the *Catholic Church* and every *Protestant sect* in the present day. But it may be said, that it is a dangerous principle to plead prescription in religion, for this argument might have been employed by Jews and Pagans in opposition to Christianity. We reply, that the establishment of *Christianity* is totally different from the establishment of

\* Ibid. Cap. xxxii. p. 39.

† Ibid. Cap. xxxvii. p. 47.

*Protestantism*; for there was a *new revelation* made from heaven in the former case, which fully warranted the introduction of a new religion, and when it can be shown that there was a new revelation made to the Protestant Reformers of the 16th Century, then, and not till then, we shall be prepared to admit the validity of their claims, and to reject the authority of the Catholic Church.

The next author is St. Cyprian, (A.D. 250), quoted by Dr Gray (p. 76) as a witness for the Protestant rule of faith. He refers to the "Epistle to Pompeius," which appeals to primitive Tradition, as contained in Scripture, on the validity of Baptism administered by heretics, in opposition to Pope Stephen\*. But this is rather an unfortunate reference, as even Protestants admit that St. Cyprian was *wrong*, and that the Pope was *right*, on the particular point of dispute involved in this appeal. On this occasion, the warmth of St. Cyprian's temper betrayed him into the use of unjustifiable language, while he defended his own opinion by an unwarrantable interpretation of Scripture, on a question on which Scripture was entirely silent. On the other hand, the Pope would allow of no innovation, and insisted on strict adherence to the Tradition of the Church†, and his decision was universally adopted, while St. Cyprian's opinion is universally rejected, both by Protestants and Catholics. His language, indeed, in that Epistle, is capable of a fair construction as to the principle of Tradition, but it must be admitted that the Saint acted with rashness in this instance, and so we find this Epistle afterwards reviewed and refuted by St. Augustine‡. This

\* S. Cypr. Opp. Epist. lxxiv. Tom. I. p. 246. (Ed. 1782.)

† Ibid. p. 247. "Nihil innovetur, nisi quod traditum sit."

‡ Contra. Don. Lib. V. 31.—Opp. Tom. ix. p. 266.

inconsistency, however, does not detract from the general testimony of St. Cyprian on the subject of Tradition. But Dr. Gray asserts (p. 76, 80) on the authority of Lumper, in opposition to Ceillier, that St. Cyprian "acknowledged no other Tradition than that which is contained in the Scriptures," and in proof of this point, he refers to his "Epistle to Fidus," in which it is stated that "he defends the Baptism of Infants by the clearest reasons, derived from Holy Scripture, without making any mention of Tradition"—and Lumper corrects the error of Ceillier, who "asserted that St. Cyprian defends Infant Baptism by the authority of Tradition." But, with all respect for these learned Benedictines, I must say that they were *both mistaken*, as well as Dr. Gray, with reference to the *facts* of the case; as it is evident, from a careful examination of that Epistle, that *St. Cyprian does not defend the practice of Infant Baptism at all* in that document—there was *no question* raised on *this* point—it was *NOT whether Infants should be baptized* (about which there was no controversy), but whether they should be baptized *before the eighth day* after their birth, and on *this* point alone St. Cyprian endeavors to remove the scruples of Fidus, by some general allusions to Scripture, showing that the analogy of circumcision was not strictly obligatory as to the *precise time* of Baptism\*; but St. Cyprian never advanced such an opinion, as that Infant Baptism was founded on Scripture alone, nor did he use the term "Tradition" in the sense of the *written* Word alone, but as including the *whole* doctrine and practice of Christ and His Apostles. We have a remarkable instance of this in his "Epistle to Cæcilius," in which he insists upon the observance of the "Dominical Tradition" of mixing water with the wine

\* S. Cypri. Opp. Ep. lix. Tom. I. p. 173.

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in the Sacramental Chalice, as founded upon the practice of our Lord at the institution of the Blessed Eucharist, and strongly remonstrates against the danger of changing the *divine* institution for *human* tradition on that point, though we have *no account* whatever of this circumstance recorded in *Scripture*, but only in *unwritten* Tradition\*.

Dr. Gray (p. 77) quotes an Extract from the Speech of the Emperor Constantine, as delivered at the Council of Nice,(A.D.325)†. It should be remembered, however, that the Emperor was not a Theologian, and therefore his opinion is of little authority. His statement, however, is perfectly Catholic, as it merely declares that the Scriptures clearly teach us correct views *on the divine nature*, and recommends the Fathers to decide the question in accordance with Scripture. But the question related to the *true interpretation* of Scripture on the Divinity of Christ, and when the Arians evaded the force of every text by *their own interpretations*, they were condemned by the Council, on the ground of their rejection of the *Divine Tradition* of the Church—not their rejection of *Scripture itself*, but of the *true sense or doctrine* of Scripture, as defined by the *authority* of the infallible Church.

The same remarks apply to Dr. Gray's quotation (p. 77) from St. Athanasius (A. D. 350), with reference to the proceedings of the Council of Nice.† The object of St. Athanasius is to defend the Nicene Fathers, in their adoption of the term "homousios" or "consubstantial" (as employed in the Creed), which is not to be found in Scripture, though it had been in use long before the time of the Council. The Fathers found it impossible to refute the Arian heresy by the language of Scripture alone, as all those expressions were fully admitted by the

\* Ibid. Ep. lxxiii. Tom. I. p. 185.

† Theod. Eccles. Hist. Lib. I. cap. 6. p. 25. (Ed. Mogunt. 1679.)

‡ Epist. ad Afro. Opp. Tom. I. p. 936. (Ed. Par. 1627.)



Arians *in their own sense*. He says, indeed, that the Bishops wished to banish the newly-invented terms introduced by the Arians, and to state the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ in the words of Scripture. The Arians assented—but at the same time *evaded* every statement by maintaining that similar expressions are employed in Scripture with reference to *other* men as well as our blessed Lord. The only question then, was, whether those terms can be applied to us *in the same sense* as to Him—and it was in opposition to this view that the true Divinity of the Son of God was asserted by this great Council, in declaring the doctrine of the Catholic Church, that our Lord Jesus Christ was “of the substance of God,” and “consubstantial with the Father.” Such is St. Athanasius’ own account, in the context of the passage quoted by Dr. Gray. We have a remarkable statement of the principles of St. Athanasius himself, expressed in the following language—“Let us consider, also, the Tradition and doctrine, and faith of the Catholic Church from the beginning, which the Lord first delivered, the Apostles preached, and the Fathers preserved. For *on this Tradition the Church is founded*, and whosoever falls from this, neither is, nor can be called, a Christian.”† We need hardly refer for additional evidence to the Creed which bears his name, as being commonly called the Athanasian Creed, in which the doctrines of Christianity are dogmatically defined, not as derived from any mere interpretations of Scripture—but on this one ground, that they express “the Catholic Faith,” and “the Catholic Religion,” as distinguished from all heretical perversions of the truth.

Dr. Gray (p. 77) refers also to St. Augustine, in favor of the Supremacy of Scripture\*, but the whole reasoning

† Epist. I. ad Serap.—Opp. Tom. I. Pars II. p. 676. (Ed. Ben.)

\* S. Aug. Contra Maxim. Lib. II. xiv. 3. Opp. Tom. VIII. p. 703.

employed in this Epistle to Maximin, the Arian, is simply an example of the *argumentum ad hominem*, in which he consents to *waive* the authority of Councils, and to discuss the question on *other* grounds, which were admitted on *both* sides. The comparison there drawn, between the authority of *Councils* and of *Scripture*, is not *absolute*, but *relative*, as St. Augustine had just been speaking in the highest terms of the Council of Nice; but, in arguing with one who *rejected* it, he is willing to *concede* this point to his opponent, in order to meet him on the *common ground* of Scripture. Besides, we find that St. Augustine constantly insisted upon the authority of Apostolical Tradition, and, in other parts of his Works, he specifies *eleven* different religious opinions, which were held in the Church, on this ground alone.\*

Such, then, is the general character of the evidence derived from the testimony of those Fathers, who have been produced as witnesses in favor of the Protestant Rule of Faith. But Mr. Hunter undertakes (p. 36) to "disprove the existence of any other Rule of Faith than Scripture." He divides the argument into four parts, and attempts to show that "unanimous consent is not to be found in the ancient *Creeds*, or in the Decrees of *Councils*, in the Writings of the *Fathers*, or in the *Church* of Rome herself." This is certainly a very comprehensive view of the subject, and would require many Volumes to discuss it properly, but the whole question is settled by him in the course of four short pages (pp. 37—40).

He begins with the primitive Creeds, and he informs us, that "two of the earliest Creeds that have come down to us are those put forth by Tertullian and Origen." But he omits the most ancient of all, that given us by St. Irenæus (which is correctly quo-

\* Vid. Fevard. Annot. in 8. Iren. Lib. III. cap. 11.

ted by Dr. Gray, p. 71), while that of Origen can hardly be included among the number, there being two such general summaries of doctrine contained in his Works—one of them preserved in the Latin Translation of Rufinus, which cannot be trusted with any certainty, while the other is not considered genuine\*. Three such forms, however, are to be found in the Writings of Tertullian†. Mr. Hunter, however, says of these two writers, that “in regard to the doctrine of the Trinity, they not only differ, but both of them are in error.” Now I am not aware that the Church has ever pronounced such a decision on this subject, and therefore I cannot accept the private opinion of a modern writer on this question of doctrine. But, whatever may have been their errors on *this* point, it is certain that they are not classed among the orthodox Fathers—their names are not enrolled in the Calendar of Saints—and their *opinions* have no authority in the Church, beyond that which belongs to them as credible witnesses to the *facts* of history. They are regarded merely as Ecclesiastical writers of great antiquity, whose *testimony*, as well as that of Eusebius, is of great importance, while their views of *doctrine* are of little weight. Mr. Hunter, then, has failed even to touch on the point to which he referred, as he makes no allusion to any of the Creeds of the Church.

He is equally unfortunate in his reference to the Councils, which he represents as in perpetual collision with each other. Mr. Hunter has, indeed, made some extraordinary discoveries in Ecclesiastical History, but as they rest entirely on his own unsupported assertions, we must be excused for questioning the accuracy of his statements ;

\* Goode's Divine Rule of Faith, Vol. I. pp. 131, 223. (Ed. 1842.)

† De Præser. cap. xii De Virg. Vel. cap. I. Adv. Prax. cap. II.

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and we are strongly inclined to think that all well-informed Protestants will be ready to apply to him the words of the Roman Poet—

“Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis  
Tempus eget.”†

He seems to imagine that every meeting of Bishops constitutes an Ecclesiastical Council, whose decisions are binding on the whole Church; and accordingly he refers us to the decision in favor of Arianism given by two heretical assemblies held at Ariminum and Seleucia (A. D. 350 for 359), but he does not tell us of the firm resistance made to the former by the Roman Pontiff, nor does he attempt to claim the Papal sanction for the latter, however numerous attended they may have been. He gives us an analysis of the Council of Nice, with reference to the different countries represented by its 318 members. Now this is more than Mr. Hunter, or any one else, can tell, as the names of about 120 Bishops, present at the Council, have not been transmitted to us. However, we have a specimen of his accuracy, in the statement that only “one came from all Africa,” while the names and Sees of *nineteen* African Bishops have been recorded in the imperfect list.\* We have another curious entry under this head. It is as follows—“A. D. 449. The Second General Council at Ephesus decided in favor of the Eutychian heresy.” Now it has been hitherto generally supposed that the Second General Council was held at Constantinople, A. D. 381; but this opinion seems to be corrected by Mr. Hunter. Still, however, it may be well to mention that, after all, the Assembly here referred to was not a *General Council*, nor was it a *Council of the Church at all*, as the meeting which has been here digni-

† Virg. Æn. Lib. II. 521.

\* Labb. et Cossart. Concil. Tom. II. p. 60.

fied with this venerable name has been always distinguished in Church History by the opprobrious title of the "Latrocinium," or "Gang of Robbers," whose proceedings were condemned and rejected by the Church.

Mr. Hunter then proceeds to apply the same principle to the Fathers, and he refers to their differences of opinion as to matters of fact, points of discipline, and interpretations of Scripture—all of which are perfectly consistent with the unity of the Catholic Faith. It must be remembered that the Fathers include a series of Christian writers who lived in different countries, for a period extending over more than 1000 years from the times of the Apostles; but surely no Catholic holds that the *Fathers* constitute the *Church*, as they are only *individual* authors, bearing testimony to various incidental points of faith and practice, and occasionally expressing their own private views on certain important questions which had not been defined by the Church, while at the same time there is a wonderful *unanimity* among them on *every article of the Faith*. But the Fathers were neither inspired nor infallible, and therefore we have nothing to do with any of their peculiar opinions on points of speculative theology, as our faith does not in any degree depend upon them, but upon the revelation of God proposed to us by the voice of His Church. Indeed it has often occurred to me, that the relation between the Popes, Councils, and Fathers of the Church may be properly illustrated by a familiar comparison derived from the constitution of an English Court of Justice. There are three parties chiefly engaged in obtaining the final results of every trial, the Judge—the Jury—and the Witnesses. The witnesses deliver their testimony in all matters of *fact*, and though there may be considerable difference between them, this circumstance

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does not usually interfere with the administration of justice—the jury, instructed by the judge as to the application of the Law, return their *verdict* according to the evidence—while the judge finally pronounces the *decision* of the Court. Thus the “Fathers” are cited as *Witnesses*—the “Councils” form the *Jury*—while the “Pope” is the Supreme *Judge* of all controversies in religion.

And lastly, Mr. Hunter attempts to apply the same mode of proof to overturn the Infallibility of the Church, by the general assertion, that “she is rent with divisions regarding doctrine and government,” after which he fancies that he has completed the demonstration by a reference to the Sixtine Edition of the Vulgate, (which has been already considered, p. 88) and to the different views which have been held as to the precise seat of Infallibility, on which I shall here make a few remarks. We hold, then, that Infallibility is the exclusive prerogative of Almighty God. Like the power of absolution, it belongs to God alone. None but God can forgive sins, and none but God is infallible. But we believe that God has been pleased to delegate a portion of His own attributes to His Church, to be exercised in His name and by His authority. We believe that the promise of Infallibility is conferred upon the Church through the medium of its visible Head, as represented in the person of St. Peter, and his successor in the See of Rome. There is no real difference among Catholics on this point. It is true that various *theological opinions* have been held and discussed among Catholic Divines on this and other subjects, but they belong to the *Schools* rather than to the *Church*, as they do not affect any article of the Catholic Faith. Every Catholic believes that the Holy See is fully competent, *be divine right*, to decide every matter of controversy *without* the necessity of convening

a General Council, and that the Acts of any General Council are of *no validity, unless sanctioned* by the approbation of the Holy See. The voice of Peter is final and decisive, whether he speaks *with* or *without* the advice of a General Council. We refer, of course, to the public, official judgment of the Church, as expressed by the Supreme Pontiff *ex cathedra*, and not to any opinions held by the individual Pope as a private Doctor. As the Vicar of Christ, we hold that the Roman Pontiff is divinely directed, and preserved from the possibility of error, in any definition relating to faith and morals, to which the universal Church is bound to submit. This power is strictly *conservative*. He can add nothing to, and diminish nothing from, the Catholic Faith. He is strictly limited by every doctrinal definition of his predecessors for the last 1800 years. His office is to interpret, faithfully and authoritatively, the whole revelation of God. In every controversy, he is bound to pronounce judgment according to the Tradition of the Church, as founded on the Scriptures, Councils, Fathers, Liturgies, and other public documents; and after mature deliberation, and consultation with the most learned and pious Divines, invoking the assistance of the Holy Spirit to illuminate their minds with the light of Heavenly Truth, the final decision of the Church is delivered, and all further discussion is at an end for ever.

In answer to the objection, that the Protestant Rule of faith affords no security from heresy, even on the most fundamental doctrines of Christianity, Mr. Hunter states (p.18) that "Protestants do not reckon Arians and Socinians to have any just title to the name of Christian." And who are *Protestants*? It is generally understood that the name applies to all who profess to take *the Bible as their only Rule of Faith*. And do not Arians and Socinians pro-

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*fess* to adopt this standard? Are they not, then, Protestants? By what test are they to be distinguished from *other* Protestant Christians? Is it by their rejection of the doctrine of the Trinity? But they reject this doctrine, because they think it is *not* in the Bible—while other Protestants receive it, because they think *it is* there. But *both* parties act on the same *principle* of private interpretation, and therefore neither of them has any right to condemn the other, as their difference is only a matter of *opinion*, and cannot interfere with the vital *principle* of Protestantism. But Mr. Hunter reduces all the divisions among Protestants to four heads, and arranges them under the four classes of “Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Independents, and Baptists.” By what authority does he exclude all *other* denominations of Protestants, who claim an equal right to the name? No Protestant, surely, can submit to such an arbitrary selection of these four favorite sects. But he adds, that “these bodies do not differ on *fundamental* points of doctrine.” And what *are* fundamental points? Who is to *define* the extent of this term, and to settle the various points of doctrine included in it? Can these bodies *agree* among themselves on these subjects? It is generally understood that the Baptists regard the *immersion of adult believers* as indispensably necessary to the validity of Baptism, while all the others *differ* from them as to the *modes, subjects, and necessity* of Baptism. They practise Infant Baptism on the sole ground of Tradition, while they profess to reject all Tradition, and cannot find any authority for the practice in the written Word of God. Is this a *fundamental* point, or not? The Baptists think it is, and act consistently with their opinion; but others regard it as an open question, and consider it as a matter of perfect indifference, while no living authority on earth is allowed to decide it.



One general remark may here be made, with reference to the right interpretation of Scripture. It is frequently objected, that the Scriptural evidence is not sufficiently clear in favor of some particular doctrines of the Catholic Faith, and that the passages relating to them *may* be understood in a different sense. Now we fully admit that they *may*, and so *may* every *other* text of Scripture, relating to those doctrines which are generally received by all Evangelical Protestants, be explained away by an ingenious system of figurative interpretation, until there is not a single article of the Christian Faith to be found in the Bible. Why, then, do Protestants admit the *one* class of doctrines, and not the *other*? Evidently not because the one are more clearly stated in Scripture than the other, for this is certainly not the fact. Surely the Scriptural proof of the Real Presence is much stronger than that of the Divinity of the Holy Ghost, which only consists of an *inference* drawn from two or three texts of an indirect nature, which might easily be applied to a created being, or to a divine attribute. And why do Catholics receive *both* these classes of doctrines as equally divine? Not because we think them expressly stated in Scripture, but because we know that they all form a part of the Divine Tradition of the Faith delivered to the Church from the beginning, and attested by the evidence of that one authority which alone is fully competent to give authentic testimony on the subject. Nothing, surely, can be more absurd than the opinion, that the faith which was given to the Church *once for all*, 1800 years ago, is now again to be examined in each *separate* article by every private Christian, and to be received or rejected, according to their views of the meaning some of particular texts of Scripture, which will always be found unsatisfactory, simply because it is

applied to a purpose for which it was never intended. Can it be really supposed that *we* understand the true doctrines of Christianity better than the *primitive Christians*, or their successors in every age, and that we are at liberty to reject their interpretations of Scripture as founded on ignorance or error? It has been well remarked, that Scripture is not Scripture, unless it is understood in the *true sense* of Scripture—just as a man's last will and testament is not his will, unless it is understood in the *true sense* of the testator, as his words *may* be so interpreted as to contradict his real intentions. If once we admit the principle, that Scripture means whatever it *may* be interpreted to mean, we open a door for the admission of every error, and destroy the certainty of every article of faith. There is not a single text in the Bible, which *may* not be understood in a different sense from what it *does* mean, and there is not a single heresy, which does not find some plausible appearance of support in the Bible. Thus the Socinian argues against the doctrine of the Trinity, because it is not explicitly asserted in Scripture, and it appears to him to be contrary to the declaration, that "there is but *one God the Father*," while Christ Himself expressly declares—"My Father is *greater than I*." The Universalist argues against the eternity of future punishment, because "*everlasting punishment*" *may* mean only *temporary*, as the word is often used in a *comparative* sense, with reference to an indefinite period, and he thinks that the final salvation of the whole human race is implied in the texts, that "Christ died for *all*," that God "will have *all* men to be saved," and that "in Christ shall *all* be made alive." And, in like manner, the Protestant argues against the Infallibility of the Church, because the promise, that "the Holy Ghost shall abide with you for ever," *may* include

all private Christians, as well as the Apostles, for "if *any man* have not the Spirit of *Christ*, he is none of his." He argues against the authority of Tradition, because the words, "hold the Traditions which ye have been taught," *may* mean only a *temporary* direction to the Thessalonians, or these Traditions *may* have afterwards been written in some of the Epistles, and besides, Christ Himself warns His disciples against the Traditions of the Jews.

Now what is the difference between these *two classes* of texts? It is admitted, indeed, that the *doctrines* founded upon them are very different, but the *principle* of interpretation is essentially the *same* in both—and thus every sect finds its own peculiar system in the Bible, while the divine authority of the Church is ignored, and the only ground of faith is the right of private judgment. How is it possible, then, to suppose that God has revealed a *religion* which we call Christianity, and yet has given us no *certain* means of ascertaining what are the *doctrines* of that religion, beyond the probable *conjectures* which are founded on the private study of the Bible, the result of which must be, that divine truth is perpetually *changing*, as being seen through so many *different minds*, while the doctrine which is true to *one person* is not true to *another person*?

It must be admitted, then, that the vital question for all who are anxious to secure their eternal salvation, is not—what is *Protestantism*? or even—what is *Catholicity*? (in the first instance) but—what is *Christianity*? and it cannot be denied that this question is answered, in general terms, by saying that it is the religion of Christ and His Apostles. How, then, are we ascertain the nature of this religion? There are two answers commonly given to this question—the one is, by the reading of the *Bible*,

and the other is, by the teaching of the *Church*. Protestants begin by attempting to settle the *doctrines* of religion, by which they proceed to try the claims of the *Church*—while Catholics begin by establishing the divine authority of the *Church*, which at once includes the divine origin of all her *doctrines*. But the former method is evidently erroneous, because we must *first* have a *divine standard* by which we are to examine and settle these doctrines ; and it is impossible to advance a single step in this inquiry without proving the Inspiration and Canon of Scripture, which cannot be done without admitting the Infallibility of the Church. This method, therefore, *reverses* the true order, and it is obvious that we cannot derive a complete knowledge of Christianity from the study of the New Testament, because that sacred book was *not written* at the time when Christianity was established on earth—because its authority must *first* be proved before we can implicitly receive its testimony—because the appeal to it *assumes* the very thing to be proved as to its complete sufficiency—and because it is capable of a great variety of different *interpretations*. We must, then, *begin at the beginning*—we must begin with the divine Institution which was founded by our Blessed Saviour before His Ascension into heaven, and therefore the only practical question to be considered is this—Which of all the various Christian denominations is the *true Church* of Jesus Christ ?

We find, then, that there is *one* religious Society in existence, which claims to be the only true Church of Christ on earth—that it was originally founded by our blessed Lord, and has continued ever since in unbroken succession to the present day—that all other Christian So-

cieties were formerly included in it, and have separated from its communion at various times—that it is distinguished for its Unity, Perpetuity, and Universality, while all others are divided from each other, and limited to particular times and places; now let these considerations be put together, and without going beyond the external facts of the case, it will follow that this Society has the only claim to be regarded as the genuine representative of the true Church, and the sole depository of the doctrines of Christianity. The first great fact, then, that is brought before us, is the *Existence of the Church of Christ*, as an historical witness for the truth of Christianity. It may be said, indeed, on the other side, that the New Testament is also an historical witness in every age, and so it is in its proper place. But it must be observed, that the New Testament was not in existence from the beginning of Christianity, as the Church was, and that, having no other credentials but what it derives from the Church, the evidence of a *written book* cannot be supposed to interfere with that of a *living person*, to whom the book itself bears testimony, and from whose sanction it derives all its authority. *Both*, indeed, are possessed of *divine* authority, but in a *different sense*—the *former* being appointed by the Great Head of the Church, with a perpetual commission to preach the Gospel in the world—whereas the *latter* consists merely of certain detached documents, which have been authorised by the *former*, and pronounced to be derived from the same source of infallible truth. The Church, then, came *first*, and the Scriptures *afterwards*—the Church was founded in the First Century, while the Canon of Scripture was not completed till the Fifth—the Church was appointed by Christ, and the Scripture by the Church—(I speak now of plain *facts*, and not of controverted *principles*)—and therefore, in all mat

ters of doubt, the Church alone is competent to decide with proper authority, as to her own *design* in publishing the Canon of Scripture, and as to the true *interpretation* of Scripture itself.

This, then, is the most simple and conclusive mode of reasoning on the subject, and that which was constantly adopted by the ancient Fathers in all their disputations with heretics. We may briefly state it thus. Jesus Christ has founded a *Church* on earth. That Church has *continued* to the present time. A *separation* from it took place 500 years ago. That separation is called the *Reformation*. Those who joined it are called *Protestants*. But the various denominations, which arose in consequence of this separation, cannot constitute the true Church of Christ, because they were formed *in opposition* to it, and the Church had existed for 1500 years *before* them. Consequently, the Catholic Church, from which all others have separated, is the only true Church of Christ on earth. But it is said that the Catholic Church was *corrupt*, and that the Protestant Churches are *pure* in doctrine. Now where is the *proof* of this charge of corruption? It is said that her doctrines are *contrary* to Scripture. But we deny it. And we maintain that the Church in every age is the only authentic witness of the true meaning of her own records contained in Scripture. She alone possesses a valid claim to a moral identity, as a corporate body, with the Church of the Apostles, which received the Scriptures, and the true interpretation of them, from their inspired Authors, whereas all modern sects are mere isolated bodies, detached from the one central Society of Christians. But it is said that the Scripture. Supposing this to be true, what then? Is Church teaches doctrines, which are not *contained* in it not sufficient that those doctrines are to be found in

the Word of God, delivered by the Apostles to the Church? But it is said that the Apostles delivered no doctrines, except those which are *written* in Scripture. The Church says that *they did*, and the Apostles themselves *confirm* the statement in their own Epistles. And the Church is the only *credible witness* in this case, because she alone was alive at the time when these events occurred, and saw and heard all the transactions connected with them. Protestants had *no existence* at the time, and consequently they are incapable of giving testimony about things which they never witnessed. The burden lies upon them to prove that the evidence of the Church is *false*, and this can never be done without an immediate *revelation* from above, to which they make no pretensions. We insist upon this as a point of great importance, which is generally overlooked—we mean the value of the Church's testimony as an *historical witness*, quite independently of her *divine authority*. Protestant writers (and my opponents among the number) are in the habit of making strong assertions, without the slightest particle of evidence, as to the doctrines which were or were not held by Christians at various periods of history, and the precise time when various corruptions were introduced into the Church. But I ask them, how do they *know*? what *authority* have they for such statements? does history record the fact? or were they *alive* at the time? If not, they cannot be credible witnesses to the facts. But there is *one Person* now in existence on the earth, who was *alive* at the time when Christ and His Apostles were in the world, who *saw* their miracles and *heard* their discourses, who was actually *present* when the Holy Ghost came down from heaven, and was directly engaged in all the transactions connected with the delivery and publication of the Christian revelation. There

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is only *one* such person now living in the world. It is not, indeed, an *individual* person, but a *moral* person, represented by a collective body, in a corporate capacity, and that person is THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. No *other* evidence is of the slightest value, even in an *historical* point of view, except so far as it is derived from connexion with her authority.\* The Holy Roman and Universal Church comes to us, professing to be the One Teacher sent from God to instruct us in the way of salvation—she proves her identity with that religious Society established by Jesus Christ on earth—she traces back her pedigree in uninterrupted succession to the times of the Apostles, where there was no rival to dispute her claims—and therefore, if Christianity be now what it was in the beginning, we must conclude that its doctrines can only be learned from that body which is invested with a divine commission from our Blessed Lord. But it may be asked, why should the Catholic Church *monopolize* this claim? why should not *other* bodies of Christians be allowed to assert the same privilege? Simply because they have *no authority* from Christ, as they are only *human* Associations, founded on the private opinions of *fallible men*. Having separated from the centre of unity, they have forfeited all connexion with the source of divine truth, while they contain within themselves the *principle* both of their creation and of their dissolution, in the right of private judgment†. It is true, they profess to believe some of the doctrines

\* It may be remarked that the learned German author, Schlegel, one of the most eminent philosophical historians of this age, assigned this reason for his own submission to the Church, that he found the testimony of the Catholic Church to be the GREATEST HISTORICAL AUTHORITY ON EARTH for the events of the past, and by this consideration was finally led to embrace her communion.

† I may here quote the following remarkable passage from an excellent practical Commentary on the New Testament, written by a pious Protestant Minister. "In early days, the Church, in every city, and place, was ONE. Every believer in that city, or place, was united to one body, which was the Church in such



of Christianity, and there is not a Protestant sect in the world, which does not retain some scattered *fragments* of Christian truth, which they have borrowed from the Catholic Church. But the Rule of Faith is denied, and the certainty of faith is denied with it. Having rejected the divine authority of the Church of God, they have nothing to rest upon, but their own guesses and conjectures as to the probable meaning of certain texts in the Catholic Bible, and having lost the true key to the interpretation of the Bible, they venture to publish their own crude and contradictory opinions as the genuine Word of God. But there is nothing of a divine origin in this process—it is all human Tradition from beginning to end. There is not a single doctrine in which they all *agree* with each other; they cannot, therefore, be *all* right, and as it is equally absurd to suppose that only *one* of them is right, we must come to the conclusion, that the Catholic Church is the *only* true Church of Christ, simply because there is *no other* Church.

But my opponents have some objections to this mode of settling the question. Thus Mr. Hunter denies that our Blessed Saviour ever founded a *visible* Church on earth at all, and maintains that the Church is an *invisible* body, consisting of all true Christians. This is indeed

a place; and those several Churches were representations, in miniature, of THE CHURCH, the united body composed of all believers, of which Christ is Head. The voice of God the Holy Ghost was in these Churches, directing, governing. There could not be two Churches, or assemblies of Christians, in the same city or place; for that would imply a division in the body of Christ. Therefore all who departed from the body in which the voice of God was heard, were guilty of HERESY, a choosing; and so heresy, or choosing a worship of one's own is ranked among the works of the flesh. But in what a state is the Church of Christ in the present day! The glory has departed. The Holy Spirit is not in the Church, as of old. The voice of God is not heard, to direct and decide; and so every one is thrown upon the evil of choosing for himself. THE CHURCH OF ROME IS PERFECTLY CORRECT IN SAYING THAT PRIVATE JUDGMENT IS WRONG. It could not be allowed—it was not allowed, when the voice of God was in the Church." [Hardman's] Comments on N. T. Vol. II. p. 79, (Ed. 1834.)

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the most consistent way of defending the Reformation from the charge of Schism, but it obviously strikes at the foundation of all Church *authority*, and fully justifies every innovation, by which heretics have constantly appealed from the *visible* to the *invisible* Church, that is, to *no Church but themselves* and their own opinions\*. In order to prove the Invisibility of the Church of Christ, Mr. Hunter refers to the well-known case of Elijah and the 7000 faithful worshippers of the true God, unknown to the Prophet, under the Jewish dispensation, in the schismatical Kingdom of Israel, while at the same time there was a flourishing visible Church in the Kingdom of Judah, under the pious King Jehoshaphat. This is his only proof—and I will not waste words in attempting to enter into a serious refutation of it. In fact, the same principle might be equally applied to prove that we have only *invisible* Sacraments, *invisible* Scriptures, and an *invisible* system of Christianity in all its parts. Indeed, it is not easy to conceive of an invisible Society, consisting of visible members, governed by visible Apostles in the beginning, and by other visible Ministers since their time, uniting in visible worship, and acting as the visible representative of the invisible God. It is hard to imagine

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\* This was the first of the errors of John Hus, condemned by the Council of Constance. "1. Unica est sancta universalis ECCLESIA, quæ est PRÆDESTINATORUM UNIVERSITAS." Thus Cranmer says—"Christ is present with HIS HOLY CHURCH which is HIS HOLY ELECTED PEOPLE, and shall be with them to the world's end. But this Holy Church is so unknown to the world, that NO MAN CAN DISCERN IT but God alone. This Church is the pillar of truth, because it resteth upon God's Word, which is the true and sure foundation, and will not suffer it to err and fall. But as for the OPEN KNOWN CHURCH, and the outward face thereof, it is NOT the pillar of truth, nor the Church of Christ, but the SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN, and the TEMPLE OF ANTICHRIST, which both erreth itself, and bringeth into error as many as do follow it." (Answer to Gardiner, p. 455, Ed. 1551.) So the Irish Articles, and the Westminster Confession, describe the Church as Catholic, Universal, or Invisible, consisting of the elect only—and particular or visible Churches, consisting of professing Christians—while they denounce the Bishop of Rome as the Antichrist, "that man of sin, and son of perdition."

how Christians could apply for direction to an *invisible* body, when our Lord says, "Tell it unto the Church"—or how such a Society could be "the light of the world," and be compared to "a city set on an hill, that cannot be hid."

Judge Marshall (p. 12) wants to know the meaning of "the Church," in connexion with the Rule of Faith. Now we do not refer to the theological definition of the term, which has nothing to do with the present inquiry. When we speak of the perpetual authority of the Church to teach the faith with infallible certainty, we do not refer to the whole body of the faithful, to whom no such authority was given by our Lord, but to the Apostles and their successors for ever, to whom the promises were given by Christ himself, and who are still represented by all the Bishops and Pastors, in communion with the Apostolic See. If the word "Church" never occurred in the Bible, it would not in the least alter this divine rule of faith and obedience, which is laid down by our Blessed Lord Himself, when He charged His Apostles to teach—not only all that was to be written in the New Testament, but—"all things whatsoever He had commanded them," the extent of which can only be learned from that collective body which received the commission, and will continue to discharge it till the end of the world.

But Judge Marshall maintains (p. 25) that it was actually foretold in Scripture that the visible Church itself should become corrupt and heretical—"that defections, errors, and heresies should very early and very frequently occur, and at times almost universally prevail in that visible Church." In proof of this extraordinary assertion, he has quoted a number of texts which clearly prove the *contrary*, as they refer to the case of heresy and schism *from*

the Communion of the Church, as well as to the degenerate lives of professing Christians *in* the Church. But the Judge has strangely confounded "apostacy *from* the Church" with "apostacy *in* the Church," and corruption of *morals* for error in *doctrine*, while there is a constant confusion in his Work between the *Infallibility* of the *Church* and the *impeccability* of its *members*, as well as between the *divine power*, and the *human agency* employed in the spiritual government of the Church, and it is only by such a confusion of ideas that there is the slightest degree of plausibility in any thing advanced by him against "The Claims of the Catholic Church."

Dr. Gray (p. 90) has totally misunderstood the principles of the Catholic Faith, when he says that we found the Infallibility of the Church upon the Bible, by which he endeavors to establish his charge against us, of violating the principles of sound reasoning, in appealing to Scripture for the *proof* of a doctrine, by which the inspiration of *Scripture itself* is proved. But there is no such fallacy as this employed in the Catholic argument. We do not found the Infallibility of the Church upon the *Bible*, but upon the *Word of God*. We believe the Church to be infallible, because Jesus Christ conferred this privilege upon her by His special promises, and we believe that He did so, because the Church herself has delivered this truth to us as part of her divine testimony, resting on the same authority as the doctrine of the Trinity, Canon of Scripture, and every other article of Faith—that authority being itself established by miracles, prophecies, and all other motives of credibility; so that we have precisely the same evidence for the truth of Catholicity as for the truth of Christianity, and therefore we give a sufficient explanation of the grounds of our faith, when we say that we are Catholics, because we are

Christians, and being convinced of the divine mission of Christ and His Church, we receive all the doctrines of the Church as resting on the same foundation. Where then, is the sophistical reasoning to which Dr. Gray refers? and where is the validity of the objection, that the doctrine of Infallibility itself is only founded upon the private interpretation of Scripture? When, therefore, this learned Divine accuses me of inconsistency in referring to Scripture for the proof of Church authority, he is entirely mistaken as to the object of this reference; for this proof is addressed to Protestants, who admit the Inspiration of Scripture, and is therefore merely an instance of the *argumentum ad hominem*, by referring them to their own infallible documents for evidence on this point; and when I further intimated, that we are at liberty to appeal to Scripture as an authentic record of *historical facts*, quite distinct from its *divine Inspiration*, I adopted this course simply to avoid the very appearance of *assuming* the Inspiration of Scripture as the ground of Infallibility, with the view of preserving a perfect consistency of reasoning on the subject, and therefore there is no ground whatever for the accusation of using the "vicious circle" in this mode of argument.

The Bishop of Nova Scotia, however, regards the Church of England as holding a peculiar position among the Reformed Churches, and accordingly he recommends the course which was formerly known as the "via media," or "middle way" between Rome and Geneva, equally distinguished from the *Infallibility* of the *former*, and the *Latitudinarianism* of the *latter*—in accordance with the pointed antithesis of Archbishop Magee, who asserted that the Catholics possess *a Church without a Religion*, and the Dissenters *a Religion without a Church*. It is supposed then, that the Anglican Communion possesses a happy

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combination of both—"Apostolical order" united with "Evangelical truth," and there is no doubt that the illusion has been sincerely cherished by many of her most devoted sons since the Reformation. But this view of Apostolical succession certainly does not appear to have been generally held by the original leaders of the English Reformation, who did not regard Episcopacy as a matter of essential importance, and were anxious to promote a comprehensive union among all Evangelical denominations which had separated from the See of Rome, on grounds which would scarcely meet with the approbation of Anglican Churchmen in the present day. It is well known that the Church of England was almost exclusively Calvinistic at that period, and continued so till the rise of the High Church party, towards the close of the 16th Century. During the latter end of the reign of Elizabeth, however, a new School of Theology commenced within the English Church, which was formed according to the views of Bancroft and Andrewes, and afterwards was more fully developed during the reign of Charles I. The chief promoter of this movement was the unfortunate Archbishop Laud, whose principles have been revived in our own day, in the publication of the "Tracts for the Times," and the other Writings of the Oxford Divines. The Archbishop strongly maintained that the Church of Rome was a *true* Church, while at the same time he held that the Church of England had a *distinct* character from all foreign *Protestant* Churches\* ; the effect of which was the substitution of a *National* for the *Catholic* Church, professing to derive her Orders from the Apostles through the Roman Church, to which she was gradually approximating both in doctrine and in ceremonies, while yet she was isolated from the common centre of Catholic

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\* Carwithen's Church of England, Vol. II. p. 297. (Ed. 1829.)

unity. But what then do English Churchmen mean by saying—"I believe ONE Catholic and Apostolic Church"? Surely they do not seriously apply these words to the Church of England. They cannot mean that Christ has *no other* Church on earth, but in subjection to the Crown of England, as the Donatists of old maintained that the true Church was only to be found in Africa. They must either mean an *invisible* Church (as it is interpreted in the Irish Articles), or a *visible universal* Church, of which the Anglican Communion is a *part*. But she is in direct opposition to the *rest* of the Church, as she rejects their doctrines, and therefore she *cannot be one* with them. And if the Church of England was always visible, where was her visibility 200 years ago, when Episcopacy was suppressed, and her Liturgy abolished, in the days of the Commonwealth?

Still, however, Bishop Binney (*Charge*, p. 44) speaks with approbation of "the sure anchorage of sound Church principles" as the only safe preservative against "the extremes of Romanism and ultra Protestantism." Certainly we agree with him that these principles afford the only security against all extremes and all errors of every kind. But the question is—What *are* sound Church principles? The Bishop rejects the Infallibility of the Church of Christ both in its *universal* and in its *national* character, and it follows as a necessary consequence, that no Church under heaven possesses more than a *human authority* in matters of faith. For if it be denied that the Holy Catholic Church is the one Teacher sent from God, it follows, either that *every particular Church* is infallible, or that *there is no infallible Teacher* of divine truth in the world at all. The former alternative is too absurd to be seriously entertained by any one, and consequently the latter is generally adopted; and accordingly it is held

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impossible to attain to any absolute *certainty* of divine truth, and that the only ground of faith must ultimately be resolved into human *opinion* or a high degree of moral *probability*. For it surely cannot be supposed that a body formed by private judgment, and established by civil power, in opposition to the Church, can possess any *divine authority* to decide controversies in religion with infallible certainty. But though the Bishop would not affirm that the Church of England *cannot* err, yet he maintains that she *has not* erred, in point of fact. But on what ground can this be asserted? She herself declares (in her 19th Article) that "the Church of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch have erred," as well as "the Church of Rome," and certainly she does not venture to claim any special *exemption* from error on the ground of any distinct promise or revelation made to *her alone*. She maintains (in her 21st Article) that even "*General Councils may* err, and sometimes *have* erred," and surely she does not mean to assert that a *National Synod*, or *Provincial Convocation*, cannot err—or that a *part* of the Universal Church possesses a privilege which is denied to the *whole*. What security, then, has *she* against error, any more than the *other* Churches which she includes in this sentence? Has not *every other* National Church an *equal* right to claim the same privilege, to the exclusion of all others? She cannot demand the spiritual allegiance of her children on the ground of any *divine authority* expressly committed to her, which she can only derive from her *former* connexion with the Catholic Church; and surely she does not pretend to claim any spiritual power from her *temporal position*, as founded upon the Royal Supremacy, or Acts of Parliament, which no one can suppose to be invested with a divine right over the consciences of British subjects. Nor can this claim be founded on the



*succession of her Bishops*, even granting the validity of their Orders; for this is possessed by *other Churches* which are admitted to have erred. Are these, then, the "sound Church principles" to which the Bishop refers? Was the Church of England founded by Jesus Christ, as the Catholic Church was? What advantage, then, has she in a *spiritual* point of view, which does not equally belong to any other Protestant denomination? None surely, but that of worldly respectability, as a National Establishment, with an Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, under the immediate government of Her Majesty, which Englishmen regard with a feeling of national pride, as an essential part of the British Constitution, and as affording a sufficient security against every other claim.

But the Bishop says that "the *peculiarity* of the Reformation in England, as contrasted with other countries, was, that it was strictly a *restoration* and not a *revolution*." That is an assertion, however, which *every other Church* is equally prepared to make; and is the Church of England to be the sole Judge in her own cause? But, after all, the assertion itself is perfectly gratuitous, as it may be clearly shown, that the *doctrines* of the English Reformation were never held by the early *British*, or *Anglo-Saxon Church*, or by the ancient *Catholic Church*. Indeed it is refuted by the next sentence, which refers to our Saviour's promise, "to be with His Church *always*, to purify her, and re-establish the primitive doctrine and practices," while yet the Bishop must hold that He had left His Church in the most dangerous errors for many Centuries before the Reformation, as it cannot be maintained that any *new doctrines* were introduced into the Catholic Church at that period. It is said, however, that the English Reformers "diligently sought out and studied the

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*primitive* system." So did all the *other* Reformed Churches, according to their own profession; and so did, above all, the *Catholic* Church, in communion with the See of Rome; and she *alone* has a right to decide, by her hereditary title, what *were* the characteristic features of the *primitive* system.

But then, according to the Bishop's reasoning, (p. 45), the great advantage of the Reformed Church of England was, that she adopted the Bible as the only Rule of Faith. She certainly did; but whether she was *justified* in doing so, and rejecting the *Word of God*, which was always held by the Church, is *another* question, which has been discussed in the preceding pages. And here again, I would observe the inaccuracy of language employed in the statement of this principle, when the Bishop speaks of the Bible as "the only infallible *guide*," as well as "the *Rule of Faith*," and draws a contrast between the Infallibility of *the Church* and the Infallibility of *the Bible*. But, as remarked before (p. 83), the Bible cannot be both a *rule* and a *guide*, as the latter relates to the application of the former, nor is the term "infallible" properly descriptive of the *Bible*, as this word relates to a *living* authority, and consequently there can be no collision between the respective offices of the Church and of the Bible.

The Bishop, however, (p. 45) "altogether repudiates the tenet, that every man may take the Bible, and discover his religion for himself, according to his own interpretation." But this principle is *not* repudiated by the Church of England herself, but is rather encouraged, both in her Articles and Homilies, and it is certainly well understood and acted upon by her Lay members in the present day. Indeed the Bishop admits that "she encourages all her children to compare her teaching with

the written Word." But what if this comparison should lead to the conclusion, that her teaching is *contrary* to the written Word? In that case, according to her own principles, the Church has exceeded her powers, and her children are under no obligation to obey her. And yet the Bishop "calls upon every one to accept the teaching of the Church, which she has preserved unaltered from the earliest ages." Now this is precisely the Catholic *principle*, however different in its *application*; and we earnestly pray that the Bishop may receive grace to act upon it faithfully and consistently, by renouncing all connexion with a Church of human origin, and returning to the One Fold of the Catholic Church of Christ.

But, while he thus substitutes a *local Institution* for the *Universal Church*, the Bishop refers to the 20th Article, which teaches that "the Church hath authority in controversies of faith." But, even if this clause were genuine\*, the Church of England is not permitted by the State to exercise this authority, which is transferred to Her Majesty's Privy Council as the final Court of Appeal in all Ecclesiastical or spiritual causes. However, the Bishop says that "we do not reject Tradition, restricted to its proper office." But the Tradition of which he speaks is not the *Apostolical* Tradition of the Church, but a mere *historical* Tradition, or Ecclesiastical testimony, which is totally distinct from the *divine* source of doctrine. The Bishop also regards with high respect "the decisions of the Œcumenical Councils, namely those held before the separation of the Eastern and Western Branches of the Church." But why does he stop at *this* point, and not include that of Trent, as

\* A good summary of the evidence on both sides of this question, will be found in Hardwick's History of the Articles, pp. 139-141.

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well as the others? It cannot be denied that the Church was representatively as complete *after* this separation as *before* it—just as a body is complete, though it has lost a diseased member, or as a tree is complete, though it has lost a withered branch. And so the Catholic Church is as complete now, as at the First Council of Nice, though the Eastern, and the Protestant Churches, have separated themselves from her Communion. However, the Bishop adds, that “we reject every thing that is plainly repugnant to the Word of God, knowing that He cannot contradict Himself.” This is sound Theology, but we hold that the Church alone is competent to decide on the application of this principle. The Bishop denies the existence of an Infallible Judge of Controversy, on the ground of an alleged opposition between Popes and Councils; but as he does not give any proofs of this assertion, it is unnecessary to enter into further particulars. He also repeats the usual cavil about the want of definition of the Seat of Infallibility, but there is no difference of doctrine on this subject, (as stated before, p. 117). It may be added, that “the Gallican Church,” “the important and influential Church of France,” to which he refers, is a religious body which has no existence separate from the unity of the Catholic Church, while that view of the question, which he calls “the ultramontane theory,” is the universal doctrine of the Catholic Church. On the whole, then, I must confess that I am quite unable to see how the proper test of “a sound Churchman” can be said to consist in attachment to a modern Ecclesiastical Establishment, of human institution, in preference to the ancient Catholic Church, of divine institution; and, with the most sincere respect for his Lordship, I cannot but express my astonishment at his apparent satisfaction with such objec-

tions as these, by which he endeavors to vindicate the Protestant Church of England from the charge of Schism in separating from the Universal Church of Christendom.

From all these considerations, then, we come to the conclusion, that if God has revealed a religion from heaven, that religion can only be found in the communion of that "One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church," to which it was originally delivered, and from which all others have separated; and, notwithstanding all the confident assertions that have been made on this subject, we maintain that she alone has preserved the Christian Faith *unchanged* and *unchangeable* in every age, and I have no hesitation in making the announcement, that IF IT CAN BE PROVED THAT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH HAS EVER CONTRADICTED HERSELF IN ANY ONE ARTICLE OF THE FAITH WHICH SHE HAS AUTHORITY DEFINED DURING THE LAST 1800 YEARS, I AM QUITE PREPARED TO RENOUNCE HER CLAIMS TO INFALLIBILITY, and to embrace any human system of fallible opinion, which can be substituted for her divine authority.

Here, then, I close the first part of this subject, which relates to the general principles of religion, in connection with the Rule of Faith and the Authority of the Church; while, in the following part, I propose to enter into a more particular consideration of the Doctrines of the Catholic Church, with a special reference to the objections of my Protestant opponents.

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NOTE to p. 78.—The Greek Text of 1 John v. 7, 8, is contained also in the Otton MS. lately discovered by Scholz, and now in the Vatican. It is supposed to have been written in the 15th Century, and the Montfort MS. is probably equally modern. The two other MSS. in which it is found, are of no authority whatever, while it is entirely omitted in the remaining 179 MSS. of this Epistle. And as it is also wanting in all the Ancient Versions except one, it follows that the English Bible is indebted to the Latin Vulgate for this text.

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